

CAPT DOUGLAS G. PHILLIPS, USN (RET.)

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Interviewer: Oakley E. Osborn

ABSTRACT

Captain Phillips was born April 9, 1917 in Rochester, New York. His grandfather served in the Civil War and was a prisoner of war at Libby Prison where he was involved in a prisoner exchange and sent to Parole, Maryland in the improbable circumstance of being a prisoner of his own Army. His father served in the Spanish-American War and was a well educated engineer who lost his job during the depression. The family experienced very hard times with all contributing through assorted odd jobs. He credits his parents with being very fair and totally devoted to their children.

Captain Phillips showed early interest in the Navy and joined the Reserve and New York State Naval Militia during his last year of high school where he made a two week cruise in a four-stacker. He then won an appointment to the New York State Merchant Marine Academy where he chose the Engineering Officer specialty. He graduated from the academy in 1937 and went to sea as a merchant mariner for three years and then gained a Navy commission. His first Navy assignment was aboard USS *Castor*, another four-stacker. He married Shirley Karns on August 17, 1941 and reported to USS *Ramsay* in Pearl Harbor on December 6, 1941, just in time to have a ringside seat for the invasion of Pearl Harbor. During the attack, *Ramsay* was at anchor and on the attack azimuth for Japanese planes aiming at the battleship USS *Utah*. *Ramsay* was undamaged and conducted patrols around the islands for the next several days before going to the Aleutians for interesting and challenging duty. He was ordered to Postgraduate School at the Naval Academy in 1943 and next was in the commissioning detail of USS *Bremerton* in 1944. By this time he was serving as Assistant, or Chief Engineer. He became a regular officer in 1947 and later that year was designated Engineering Duty Officer. A succession of jobs followed which utilized his talents and knowledge of ship power plants and systems. While at Service Squadron Three in Sasebo, Japan he solved a number of challenging repair jobs on deployed ships. In 1963 he reported to the Board of Inspection and Survey (BIS) under the command of then RADM Eugene Fluckey, famous WWII submarine skipper and holder of the Medal of Honor. His observations of Admiral Fluckey and the workings of BIS are worthy of note. His final tour was with the Bureau of Ships as Director of the Machinery Division. He retired from the Navy in 1965 with nearly 30 years of service.

Doug Phillips first civilian position was with De Laval in a management role expediting the completion of several Navy contracts. He then accepted a construction manager position with the University of Beirut building a campus hospital. That was followed by service as the County Engineer for Talbot County, Maryland and later in the Maryland Environmental Service.

His wife, Shirley, was an accomplished swimmer who received a number of awards for lifesaving while serving aboard Coast Guard Auxiliary ships in the Chesapeake Bay.

Captain Phillips passed away June 17, 2011 in Easton, Maryland at the age of 94.

HISTORY

OEO: Good morning Doug. Tell me the date and place of your birth.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Rochester, New York, April 9th, 1917.

OEO: This one's a little harder. Talk about your parent's background, nationality, where they lived and so forth.

CAPT PHILLIPS: My father was a Spanish-American War veteran. He enlisted for the War and, of course, that was a short war. He got a physical retirement because of the disease that spread in the training camps down south.

My mother was a local girl from Cardiff, New York which is near Syracuse. Her father was the owner of the general store. She was born and raised there and was a secretary. I believe they were married in 1914.

OEO: What was their heritage?

CAPT PHILLIPS: My father was a direct descendant of Isaiah Phillips who was an enlisted man from Pomfret, Connecticut during the American Revolution. I verified what he did because I had a cousin that made a family genealogy of the Phillips family; the Rhode Island branch. We all got copies which gave a description of the battles he was in. The information was valid enough for my younger sister to join the DAR. My mother; I don't know how many generations she was in this country but she was born and raised in Cardiff, New York, which was the home of the Cardiff Giant.

OEO: The Cardiff Giant?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The Cardiff Giant. They went out in a field one day; some farmers, and dug up this huge nine-foot man – they said it was a carving – and this was back in the late 1800s, and my mother told us this story when we were kids. Anyway, they were digging and low and behold they dug up this giant. Sometime before they had buried it quietly and then had a big celebration and people came from all over examining it. Finally I think it wound up in the Barnum and Bailey Circus. It was a big fraud but it put Cardiff on the map. My grandfather owned the only store there, a general store. So that's why I refer to it as the "Home of the Cardiff Giant."

OEO: Your grandfather served in the Civil War. Talk about that a little bit.

CAPT PHILLIPS: My grandfather was about 18 years old when he enlisted early in the Civil War and was a member of the 185th New York Volunteers. He was taken prisoner of war near Petersburg, went to Libby Prison and then they had an exchange of prisoners. They sent him to Libby Prison because he had been appointed an officer, and the Libby Prison then was mostly infantry officers. He then went to Parole, Maryland, was paroled, and was supposed to get out of the War for a while but he reenlisted immediately and finished out the War. He was in the Wilderness Campaign in Virginia. I never knew him. He was buried in a cemetery in Niagara

Falls and each year, as a youngster, my mother and father would go with my uncle and bring the three boys and we would drive all the way from Rochester to Niagara Falls for a picnic and would go to Grandpa Phillip's grave. His name was Cyrus P. Phillips. My father was Cyrus Fred Phillips.

OEO: What was your transportation for that trip?

CAPT PHILLIPS: My uncle had a Studebaker Light 6 Touring Car – and we all piled in that and drove all the way to Niagara Falls and back for a family gathering and picnic.

OEO: How would you characterize your parents?

CAPT PHILLIPS: They were very fair. They worked hard. My father was a brilliant engineer. He made Tau Beta Pi, the honorary engineering society, at the University of Syracuse when he graduated. He had several electrical engineering jobs. The thing that amazed me, he would get interested in a new subject; he would decide to get into astronomy, and he'd come home and get all the books he could gather and then he'd talk to us and tell us of what he had learned in astronomy. It was an interesting experience for me because I was a baby when they moved to that location in Rochester and I spent my whole life there until I got out of high school.

My mother was very fair and she was willing to paddle us when we needed paddling and we knew that and adjusted accordingly. One of the things she did that I'll always remember, she said, "Up until age whatever it was; 16 or 17 or something, you're going to go to Sunday School, period. We are not going to talk about it. You're going to be going to Sunday school." We accepted that. And then she said, "From then on you can choose which way you want to go."

They were really good parents. They worked hard. My father lost his job during the depression and Mother used to do housework and any work that she could find. In fact, any of us kids would do anything to earn a buck. I was mowing the lawns at 25 cents for one lawn. I mowed lawns, sold magazines, newspapers. My brother and sister did the same thing. Like a lot of families then, we just survived. They were paying a mortgage every month. We did have a garden and my father was a great gardener. We also had a few chickens.

We had an icebox like most people which had to be emptied every day. My father, being an engineer, went in the basement and put in a funnel and a piece of pipe and piped it outside so you never had to empty the bucket. In that hole he dug he grew horseradish. When we were having a meal he'd get the word from my mother when to start getting the horseradish ready. He'd go out and dig up a root, wash it, put a little vinegar on it, and we had fresh horseradish. He died at 72 and I didn't get there in time. I was too far to get there in one day. He had an ulcer or some stomach ailment from drinking and my mother tried to slow him down. He was smarter than us kids gave him credit for because he was interested in so many things. One time he worked for Taylor Instrument Company. He was in charge of the plating and he learned all there was to be known about metallic plating. He did the best he could with two boys and a girl offspring. I went to one grade school and graduated and then I went to one high school and graduated. The city school system had a program where each Monday you'd bring about 50 cents or a dollar to school and fill out the deposit slip for the Rochester Savings Bank and once or twice a month

we'd do that, and that's how we got interested in savings. People didn't think much of it but I had quite an account there. I had worked summers at a golf course and I got a big salary of \$15 a week but I worked so hard for it I stashed it away. I was pretty stingy with it.

I learned about the Merchant Marine Academy early on. The father of one of my friends had knowledge of it and he showed me the way to get going because they didn't have counselors in schools at that time. He got a lot of background for me and I applied, took an aptitude test and was accepted. It was a state school. We were aboard a World War I Long Islander, a four-hold cargo ship. A lot of the shipping lines were still running them. One of them was Navy, the *Procyon*.

OEO: Let's go back. What was your father's greatest influence on you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: He was a gentle person in behavior. He didn't beat us like what some families go through which is pretty bad. He was very patient with us. I always regretted that I didn't know more about him, because growing up as a child you don't know all that much about your father. He got through thick and thin, job wise. One time he went and took a job as an electrician wiring miniature golf courses. Miniature golf courses came along and everybody was building them all over and he got a job wiring one of those. It was a fill-in for something to do. I know college graduates that can't change a fitting on a lamp.

OEO: What about your mother; what was her greatest influence on you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: My older brother had an eating problem and wouldn't eat. She had terrible trouble with feeding him. So she went to the Home Bureau which was a group of women that got together and talked about nutrition; what the healthy foods were and why you ate them and so on, and she got into that sort of thing because she was trying to keep him going, and we all followed in step. She knew a lot and she made us eat right and that's the way we were brought up and we respected her because we knew she was doing what was best for us.

We weren't always perfect but we did reasonably well and had a wonderful life in Rochester. Rochester has parks and is called "The Flower City" for flowers and for having mills there. Rochester was a great place to grow up. It was just a short distance to Lake Ontario where there was swimming and fishing. During the winter we had wonderful winter sports; ice skating, tobogganing; things like that, so it was really great for kids. I would never go back there to live because I shoveled too much snow when I lived there.

OEO: How about your siblings; say a little bit about each one of them.

CAPT PHILLIPS: My brother and I didn't get along too well. We were competitive. He was on the track team in high school and did a wonderful job, so I got on the track team when I was due and tried to emulate my brother. He went on to college and in his junior year was diagnosed with tuberculosis and I'd been sleeping in the same bedroom with him all these years; most of the years. I used to visit him at the sanitarium. I don't know what all the treatment was but after a couple of years he came out of there cured. The crazy part is that in his senior year in college he

set a new mile record on the track team and I never figured that one out because he had tuberculosis.

My sister; I kind of looked after her and she wrote a book of poetry that she made up from high school to college days and she said, "I wish I could print it up", or something some years ago, and I said, "Well I'll help you." So she got it all together and I gave her enough money to publish it. I also bought her a bicycle. I was well off then. I helped her out several times because she didn't have spending money and while in college she had a nervous breakdown; they called them then, because she had friends who were people who protested the draft. They were anti-war, and she had a lot of friends because she was tied in with a bunch of divinity school students. In fact, the man she married was a minister and that was kind of sad because after he worked all those years and had the retirement time in with the ministry he, within a year, had a heart attack and passed away after retiring. She has had a tough time of it. I've tried to help her out over the years and we still converse. She raised a family, has always been busy in church work, and we still get together occasionally

OEO: Your grade school years; what are your memories of the first eight years in school?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I had trouble with some courses but we had wonderful teachers and we didn't have near the problems they have now. I got into dramatics; as in the Drama Club and I took the standard course except I took all the mathematics I could get. Ordinarily you only had to have two years; Elementary Algebra and Trig, or Geometry. I took all I could get including Solid Geometry and all the math courses available in high school.

I had to walk or ride my bicycle. Behind our school we had a huge shed and most of the students came to school on their bicycle. West High was a good school and I was on the track team and the Drama Club. Those were about my only extra-circular activities. We were grateful because it was walking distance from where we lived and school buses weren't invented yet.

OEO: Your high school years; would you say that you were pretty comfortable and well settled? How would you characterize them?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was comfortable but didn't do as well as I could have. I liked to take it easy too much of the time. I was supposed to be studying and working and I skipped things that I should have done. In that regard I wouldn't grade myself as an eager beaver. We knew, when we went to high school, we were going to finish and there were no ifs, ands, or buts, or quitting to go to work somewhere else. That was our mother's and father's influence on us. So we had, I would say, a good average family setup that worked hard and survived the Great Depression, and they had to sacrifice and do all sorts of things. We accepted it. We didn't stew about it or go out and rob banks to get money. Of course we didn't know until afterwards how bad it was because as soon as the war started, things picked up. I was lucky. The high school education system in Rochester had a very good reputation and they had required courses. They did a good job of giving us an education to get going. We didn't have the community colleges as much in those days.

I learned about the Merchant Marine Academy and decided I wanted to do that. In the meantime, while I was senior in high school, there was an advertisement on the bulletin board in school about a training ship down in Yonkers, New York, moored in the Hudson River. It was a four or five masted barquentine rig. It was a two-week deal and you could sign up and pay a minimum amount. All we had were white hats as a uniform. I went by myself all the way from Rochester, New York to off the Hudson at Yonkers where the ship was moored. There was an old retired lieutenant there that was Captain; Captain Bold his name was, and he had his girlfriend aboard. We didn't do much. The spars were all still in place. We did go up and over; up and over is go up one set of ratlines and down the other side. We also painted and scrubbed decks and it was kind of interesting. The main menu was potatoes and when I came home I had pimples or something and my mother wanted to know what we'd been eating. I said, "Oh, we had a lot of good food; potatoes mostly." It was only about two weeks but I learned from that. The write-up on the school bulletin board sounded pretty good and the education system didn't object, so that was my first experience with that.

OEO: Was that ship seaworthy?

CAPT PHILLIPS: It was out of commission. There was a lot of bad wood in it. Before it even went to sea as a regulatory it would have had to have had a major overhaul. But he bought it and got these kids to come down and we painted and ate potatoes, and you know, had a good time because we were just teenagers.

In my senior year, I joined the Naval Reserve. There was a Naval Reserve unit down on Lake Ontario and we had a World War I sub-chaser that we would go out on. First we'd go down for a drill. We'd have drill and then have dinner and go home. I used to either ride with a friend or go on the streetcar all the way to the lake. That is how I got started in the Naval Reserve. We were USNR and New York Naval Militia; NYNM. It's a state militia. The one cruise I made during the one year I was in there, they took us by train to New York and put us aboard a four-stacker and we went on a training cruise, went to sea, fired at towed targets. We went into Norfolk for the weekend and then sailed back. It was a two-week cruise and that was a typical training cruise for those units. Our schedule was to man a destroyer because they had all those destroyers in reserve; a lot of them - they were in and out of reserve - that were built during World War I, and then the War ended so we had a lot of destroyers on hand. That was my one cruise in the Navy ship and I was really proud. I was the junior seaman at 17 or 18. The petty officer I reported to said, "I've got a job for you." I said, "Oh, that's good." He said, "We're going to make you Captain of the Head", and I thought, "Wow, I'm going up fast!" I found out what Captain of the Head was and since I was a junior seaman as a group in the division I couldn't go anywhere and bitch about it, so I had to do what I was assigned. I was a loader during general quarters. I was trained as a Second or Third Loader and we had 4-inch, they called them Rapid Fire Guns, but they were surface guns with no AA (anti-air) capability. I was on two ships of that class. That was *USS Tattmall*. The second ship, after I went on active duty was the *Ramsay* which was also a four-stacker, a similar ship.

OEO: The *Tattmall*; that was a class that was built for World War I? What was the biggest gun on that ship?

CAPT PHILLIPS: There was a gun on port and starboard on that deck; one deck above the main deck. There was a 3-inch gun forward and we carried torpedo tubes. Originally they carried torpedo tubes. Later, they took off the guns. On the *Ramsay* we still had two 4-inch guns and one 3-inch gun but the torpedo tubes were all removed and they put tracks down the deck port and starboard where they loaded the mines. They were spherical mines that were tacked onto a box that contained the cable that would anchor on them when they were dropped. Anyway, that comes up later when we talk about the *Ramsay*.

OEO: Your primary and secondary school was during the period of 1922 to 1935 and most of those years were pretty tough in terms of the economy and so forth. What are your thoughts and memories about that period and the way life really was?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I think we were well aware of the financial situation because my mother would explain to us why we couldn't have some things that we wanted and at Christmas we didn't get very much. It was all they could afford because they still had a mortgage to pay and a family to feed. I've heard stories about the Depression and most of what I've heard is true. People were different then. You didn't have a rash of bank robberies and things like that but you had people working and looking for jobs. Hobos abounded. By the time I was working on a tanker I was still single and would send money home occasionally to help out. If I sent \$25 my mother would write a letter saying, "Thanks, we used that", and I did what I could in helping them out. I didn't feel that I was doing anything special. That was family and that's the way a lot of families lived during the Depression.

OEO: You are getting towards the end of high school. What was it that steered you into the Naval Reserve?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I had seen the Naval Reserve training ship down on the lake and one of my best friends in school was headed for the Naval Academy and he knew how to do it. He had the ropes and he had everything else. He was going to the Naval Academy. So I thought, "Well I can try for that". So, when I graduated from high school I had already looked into applications but it turned out that I was one or two drills short of having enough time to go to the naval school for enlisted men to enter the Naval Academy, and so they said, "You will have to wait another year", and I said, "Okay." In the meantime, I'd applied for the Merchant Marine Academy and I thought, "Well I'll do that. I can't wait a year. A year is a lifetime." Anyway, I went to the Merchant Marine Academy and I wound up second in my class at graduation and I liked engineering from the start. We had a choice. We could sign up as a deck officer or an engineering officer. I preferred the engineer and have enjoyed it all my life

OEO: Was the curriculum different for deck officer than for an engineer?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, some things we did the same; lifeboat handling, boating and things like that, and damage control, but the rest of the time they were studying piloting, navigation and all those courses so that when they got out they were qualified as a Third Mate. They could then go on up and get their Master's license, and a lot of them did.

I was given leave to get my Second's license and then I sailed as Second Mate and after three years I had my Ensign's commission. I had broken service. I had a four-year enlistment and I didn't go to any active duty but they could have called me anytime.

OEO: This was while you were at the Academy?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes. While I was at the Academy one of the things I discovered was that they had correspondence courses for people in my situation; written correspondence courses: Navy Regulations, Military Law, some Engineering, a little bit of everything. You sent your work in, they'd grade it and send it back, and this was all while I was still in school. It was a wonderful opportunity. Otherwise I wouldn't have known port from starboard if I hadn't gotten involved like that.

Once I got appointed I went to the *USS Procyon* renamed the *USS Empire State*. It was a Navy ship on loan to the state of New York and they had permission to change the name to *Empire State*. The Navy kept control of all those ships. We didn't have a free ride. We had to maintain it and so on.

OEO: What class of ship was this and about when was it built.

CAPT PHILLIPS: It was built in 1917; the training ship, and it was called a Hog-Islander because there was a shipyard in southwest Philadelphia called Hog Island Shipyard where it was built. It was built for the War as a cargo ship.

At that time, our Merchant Marine had gone to hell in a hand basket because the people that were operating these ships were getting a subsidy that they wasted. They'd get two bags of mail and were paid \$1,000 to take that bag of mail across the ocean. It was called a "Mail Subsidy" that the government was feeding out to those shipping companies because they weren't saving their pennies to buy a replacement ship when that ship wore out. So they were all starting to wear out.

OEO: The *Empire State* was a cargo ship that had been pretty well used?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Well I forget what its designation was; whether it was a stores ship or what it was, but the Navy took over several of them and converted them for auxiliary purposes such as tenders. They were good ships. They only had a 2,500 horsepower engine, single screw, steam of course, water tube boilers and black oil rather than coal. I liked that because there were still ships that you could get a job on where you shovel coal, and I don't know whether I could have done that or not.

OEO: Talk a little bit about the engine room. What kind of environment was that?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Well it was a typical engine room environment. We had firemen in the fire room and then we had water tenders. Depending on the ship design, some of the water tenders were up one level but the fireman on that ship was also the water tender. Then we had the oilers and we had some day workers. There was a Third Assistant Engineer or Second or First as the

top watch stander and he was the licensed officer and he ran the watch. They had an engine order telegraph on the bridge and in the engine room. That is how we maneuvered the ship.

When I went on the tanker I was a Firemen, or a Wiper - I forget which - but I started out as a Fireman even though I had my license then. Then, when one of the officers went on vacation, I moved up to that place while they took their vacation. I got my time in eventually; after a little over a year, and sat for my Second Assistant's license. I got that because I didn't know how long I was going to stay in the Merchant Marine. I figured I might as well do the best I can while I'm there.

One time the Second was coming aboard – he'd been ashore in Port Arthur and we had the watch. We'd gotten underway and I had the afternoon; the 12 to 4 – he came down in the engine room drunk. He was my friend. On the way down to the machine shop; as you came down the ladder there was a fire axe there, so he brought the fire axe down and we're getting bells. Everybody's getting bells. We're navigating the channel that goes from Beaumont to the ocean. He came down and said, "I'm going to get you, you SOB", or something. So I told the oiler – because I was answering bells and reporting the signals and all. I got along pretty well with most of the oilers that worked for me – I said, "Get him up to his room in his bunk and close the door." I told him upon going up, I said, "Pat, I'm going to take your watch. You go away. You get out of here". He finally agreed to go because he was in bad, bad shape. I was, of course, new to something like that. I wasn't used to that. We were good friends. He apologized afterwards but I was really scared when he came down with an axe.

I first moved from oiler or water tender to the Third's job. The First Assistant was an old, old timer, very smart, and he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "This is your first watch, isn't it", and I said, "Yes." He said, "Well you've learned a lot and you know a lot, but don't forget you're responsible for everything that goes on down here. You're in charge. Just keep in mind that you've got an important job and you've just got to do it right", and I said, "Well I understand that." It was a fatherly thing and he was trying to help me, and he did. I didn't resent it at all. He was probably as old as my father so I listened to him. It went well. I had a good reputation with Gulf. In fact when I went on active duty they gave me the difference in pay between a Third Assistant engineer and Ensign.

OEO: Now we jumped ahead to Gulf. We need to go back to the *Empire State*. Were the seamen in the *Empire State* civilians or Navy?

CAPT PHILLIPS: They were all working for the state of Maryland but were qualified for firemen. The Captain was John Harvey Tomb, Captain, USN retired. He was a wonderful guy. He worked very hard to get the Army to turn Fort Schuyler over to the state. Fort Schuyler is a five-sided fort in Westchester County in upstate New York, right on the water.

We stood watches underway. We went on two cruises, three months each. The first one we went to Washington, DC and that impressed me. As we went by Mount Vernon, we tolled the bell. We went to Washington and from there to Bermuda where we spent a couple of weeks doing boat handling. Most of the boats were rowing boats. We had a few with engines. We did a lot of boat work and things like that while we were in Bermuda. We also had a dance and I worked on the

committee. The year I had it we got an orchestra and we had a ship's dance aboard. We went from there to Coco Solo. That is the only time I ever got to Coco Solo. We went through the channel and down the coast. As we got through the canal, there was a fishing spot and we put a couple of boats in the water and they went fishing. This is on the Pacific side. Then we went down to Peru to a port town named Trujillo. That Peru visit made quite an impression on me. We only went to Peru, back through the canal to some port and then back to New York. That was three months. During that cruise the Captain would have the licensed officer of the watch let the cadets on watch do all the functions which gave us a lot of confidence. He would tell the officers of the deck, "You stay in the charthouse. You keep your eye on things. But the first class cadet is the officer of the watch and the CO and everything else". "If you have to take over, sure. But otherwise you turn it over to the first class cadet and he's got the watch. He's got everything unless he comes to you and says, 'I'm in trouble'." They did the same in the engine room. The engineer of the watch stayed up in the machine shop and the first class cadet was in charge of the whole watch; engine room, fire room and the whole thing, and that's how we got as much training as we did in such a short time. You know, you're 18 years old and you've got the watch!

OEO: Did that ship have horizontal passageways or was everything vertical passageways?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, generally you could go one deck down and the rest was open cargo space, and they had a lot of ballast in it. I think they had some storerooms down there but I know they had a lot of ballast because we were an empty cargo ship.

OEO: What was your second cruise?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The next year we went to England; to Dover, where we spoke the language pretty well and then to Holland. We went up the canal to Amsterdam and that was an interesting trip. We were still kids right out of high school and we're having a cruise. We always started out in Bermuda. We only did about ten knots. We weren't a high-powered ship. It was really a school ship. In the meantime, we were having classroom instruction, fire drills; it was a course of indirectly being in the Merchant Marine. Captain Tomb said he wanted to make Fort Schuyler the Annapolis of the Merchant Marine. They started as a state school for the Merchant Marine. In the meantime several states; Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, then Maine, California and Texas, all had school ships. By then they had all gotten to college level. They were certified to teach a course that would get a Bachelor of Science degree and they went to three and then four-year courses.

OEO: Your course at the New York State Merchant Marine Academy was how long? And what paper did you walk away with; what was your qualification?

CAPT PHILLIPS: First of all, I had to qualify for a Lifeboatman Certificate where for the final test you have to put a boat in davits, you launch it, and you've got an oarsman. You launch it. You row out - we did this in New York Harbor - and someone threw a dummy in there. We recovered that and then we had to give all the commands to get the boat back and get the hook on and back aboard. I still have my Lifeboatman Certificate. With that I had all the papers I needed so that I could sail as a water tender, fireman, pump man, I don't know what all because I never used them, but I had them to fall back on because things were tough. I've seen ships where all

the mates were master mariners and all the engineers were chief engineers. We were in hard times. The officers all had licenses. They'd gone to sea. They knew what they were doing and they knew we were cadets. One was a Britisher and we could hardly hear him but he was a really good engineer and a good leader for a bunch of young people.

OEO: What period in history would that have been where there was an overage of those qualified people going to sea?

CAPT PHILLIPS: There was a long, long maritime strike and that was about the time we graduated in 1937. The effects were still being felt then because we had our papers and we could not join the union because they didn't accept the sea time we had. We couldn't join the union and the shipping companies; a lot of them were hiring through the union hall to end the strike and the one I happened to hit on was Gulf Oil. They had their own hiring hall. I went to Gulf Oil and they told me what they had and they said, "We'll put you up - if you want to go to work now - on the next ship that comes in." In the meantime, they didn't have one coming in right away so they put me on an oil barge. I had never been on a barge and didn't know what an oil barge did. Turns out, they went around New York Harbor with a tugboat. I didn't know that and I went aboard and the first thing I wanted to see was the engine room. I found the pump room but couldn't find an engine room anywhere. I thought, "What have I done?" I learned. Then the *Gulf Tide* came in. She was newly built at Sparrow Point and had General Electric steam turbines. Steam turbines and reduction gear, and of course water tube boilers. The newer boilers were coming out then. They started to do some automation insofar as water tending and things like that. *Gulf Tide* was very modern, a wonderful ship. I think my first job was Fireman. Then I moved up to Oiler and by that time the officers were going on vacation and they just moved me - they wouldn't do this in the Navy but they do it in the Merchant Marine - I moved from the forecabin quarters with the crew to officer quarters up above, and put my license up on display and I was Third Assistant Engineer. They kept rotating and after several months I was Second Engineer. Third Assistant Engineer was a hard job because at that time everything below decks was DC (direct current). The Third Assistant Engineer was responsible for the electrical auxiliaries. Of course I had machine shop training; a limited amount.

OEO: Let's go back just for a minute to the Merchant Marine Academy. What was your impression of the education you got when you looked back on it after you had been out in the world a while?

CAPT PHILLIPS: It was good because we did a lot of real stuff and we had lectures. We had college level mathematics and electricity books and we studied ship construction, damage control and things like that; things that actually applied to what we were doing. I don't think any of the engineering officers had more than a seagoing career. They weren't college graduates with fancy degrees. That is what replaced the old, they used to call them "School Ships" and "Training Ships" that the different states had. I would say; the training was appropriate for the time. Then, the credential requirements kept moving up and moving up. The educators eventually took over and all these old buds that were good mates and engineers were long gone. I stayed in the Alumni Association and got a bulletin that the graduating class had failed the Coast Guard exam. The exam was originally under the Steamship Inspection Service and then during the war it went to the Coast Guard. That was where we went to get our licenses raised. It

was shocking when I read that. The mids were getting a lot of other courses but when they took the Coast Guard license it was on practical workday work. They were failing and I thought, “Well the academics have taken over”, because they required people to have, you know a master’s degree minimum or a doctor’s degree to teach the class. They were good except they’d never been to sea. That was a big change that was inevitable.

In the meantime, things changed rapidly. In the Merchant Marine, historically and slowly, they were going from sail to steam. When they went to steam they had reciprocating engines and when the steam turbines came out they didn’t want to trust those things. They couldn’t see what was happening. So they liked the reciprocating engines. They finally got into turbines probably right after World War I or around that period of time. Almost everything was steam turbine and water tube boilers. No more scotch boilers. So it was a major change in the Merchant Marine and a lot of people don’t know it but the guy that brought that about was FDR. I’m not usually a big FDR fan but he saw what was happening to the Merchant Marine and he started that shipbuilding program during the ‘30s when they started building modern destroyers. They also built the C-1, C-2 and C-3 tankers. All those tankers that saved us in World War II; all those auxiliaries, they were all designed and they had been built by the Maritime Administration with the cooperation or with the convincing of the Navy. They had the basic mounts for guns and they were ready to go. We were just a few weeks converting from a merchant ship. We used to sail with the New York and Cuban Mail Steamship Company. That was who was sailing it when the Navy took it over. In fact, our chief engineer on the *Castor* was the chief engineer of the ship when it was in the Merchant Marine. They just ordered him to active duty with a lieutenant’s commission. It called for a lieutenant and he was Chief Engineer. So there were a lot of changes going on.

OEO: We’re talking 1937 now and you’re getting ready to go out and fend for yourself in the world. How sensitive and knowledgeable would you say you were to the world’s situation; the situation in Europe and what Hitler was doing?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was very well educated in that I used to read a lot. I can remember to this day reading about the 552 Treaty of 1922 that established the ratio of battleships or whatever of the United States, England and Japan. I was reading these articles about the beautiful huge battleships coming out of Japan with 18-inch guns; bigger than what we had, and as this is going on we weren’t building any battleships but we did get merchant ships ready for them. I did read a lot and I had my correspondence courses. I forget what it was that I read; *Readers Digest* or one of those magazines, and they had interesting articles about what was going on in the world. Also, you would get around the ship, talk to shipmates and people you’d see and you kind of got the picture.

OEO: Did you see where Hitler was headed at that time? Did you see that in 1937?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, we saw the formation of that group and what they were doing but that came, you know a little bit later. Hitler’s background started much earlier, but by the time I knew a lot about it was in the early, like the early ‘40s. During that period that I was going to sea in the Merchant Marine, a lot of things were going on in the world. I remember reading particularly about the battleships and things like that that came out. They weren’t classified.

OEO: You have already touched on how you ended up in the *Gulf Tide*. The impression I get is that there weren't a lot of good jobs available for you and your buddies and you were fortunate to get that position.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Some of our graduates went to sea as cadets or Fourth Officers on passenger ships but they were few and far between. We had a wonderful fleet of oil tankers because most of them were American flag. Some were Panamanian or Liberian.

OEO: You did go to sea in *Gulf Tide* and by that time you'd had some time at sea. Did you find going to sea to your liking? Were you comfortable at sea?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, I looked forward to it. We had drills and so on and we had to stand our watches but we had excellent food and most of the time we had good weather. For instance, when we came back from loading in Port Arthur, Texas, we'd go along the Florida coast and you could see the markers for the inboard channel. We would sail close to land because we caught the gulf tide which helped us along and increased our speed so we sailed close.

OEO: You were going from Port Arthur to where?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Most of our trips were to our refinery on Staten Island. We made some other trips. One time we made a trip into Providence, Rhode Island in 1938. That was the year of the hurricane that devastated New England and we headed out to sea. We headed out and finally got into Providence, Rhode Island. I've never seen a town in such terrible shape. It had calmed down because we had a full load and we didn't stay out with a full load. Anyway, we came in. The town had used railroad ties to mark parking spots. These all became waterborne and they went down Main Street where these plate glass windows were huge and ties were going through the plate glass windows into the stores and banks. That impressed me because I had never seen the results of a hurricane before. It was an interesting experience. We made ports other than Staten Island. When I did get in to home port I'd go in and ask, "How's my application for Ensign in the Naval Reserve going?" "Well", they said, "There's a quota." There was always some reason because this was before the emergency was declared by Roosevelt in '39 or '40.

OEO: What was the form of this emergency? What triggered him to declare an emergency?

CAPT PHILLIPS: What the Japanese had done; they were negotiating all these months. They were going back and forth and back and forth. A year before Pearl Harbor is when the emergency was declared but at the time of Pearl Harbor they still didn't know where they were going to strike.

OEO: By that time one of our ships had been attacked in the Atlantic.

CAPT PHILLIPS: We watched a couple of ships get hit long before we got in and they were sinking them right off Hatteras and the Outer Banks.

OEO: When did you apply for a Navy commission?

xxxxCAPT PHILLIPS: As soon as I graduated from the Merchant Marine Academy in '37. I had a friend who had done that. They had a general classification commissioning ensigns and I heard about that. Well they stopped that program. So I applied and I got an endorsement from Captain Tomb. I had all the required paperwork in. I was still taking the correspondence courses so it wasn't until 1938 that I got an honorable discharge. My four years was up from '34 to '38 and I had one year non-Navy service. The fact that I hadn't gotten beyond Seaman I guess I figured, "They don't need me anywhere" because there was no way of getting a promotion in that part of the Naval Reserve. One day I saw a classmate on the street and he told me that they were looking for young engineers for the 50 destroyers that were going to Great Britain. So I went in there again and I applied. I talked to some old time mustang; a lieutenant, and he saw the record. He said, "What are you doing now?" I said, "I'm Second Assistant Engineer on the *Gulf Tide*." He looked it up in the book and he said, "You're eligible for LTJG." I filled out all the papers and had a physical exam. There was no written exam, nothing! Pretty soon they mailed me the commission. I got a commission and that was 1939, so I had one year of broken service. Then, in 1940, I was reading the newspapers and could see the handwriting on the wall. So I put in for active duty on one of those destroyers but they had filled that and I was assigned to a mine layer. When I put in application for a ship, I circled mine layer. That is why I was assigned to the *Ramsay*.

OEO: Let's go back to your 1940-41 tour in *USS Castor*.

CAPT PHILLIPS: I went to *Castor* almost immediately after commissioning. *Castor* was in Staten Island in Brewer dry dock undergoing conversion. I had quit Gulf Oil on good terms and was living at the fraternity house of one of my high school chums, which was good living. When I first went to *Castor* I stayed at the Hotel Pennsylvania. My friend came up to see me and said, "We can't afford this." He said, "You're going to move into the fraternity house with me." I said, "Okay." Anyway, I was in Staten Island. The ship was not in commission. The Captain was reporting aboard and a couple of us, we had a hot stove there and we'd cook some of our meals there in our stateroom and the Captain heard about it so he came down and joined us one night when we had one of those meals. Eventually we got everything done in Brewer Dry dock that they could do and moved to the Brooklyn Navy Yard where we had a commissioning ceremony and took over and were on our way.

A lot of the officers aboard were Merchant Marine. The 1st Lieutenant, which was a high ranking deck officer then, had a Master's license three or four times over. Several engineers were in the Naval Reserve. The Radio Officer was a Chief Mate or a Master in the Merchant Marine. And there were a lot of Merchant Marine officers on there, and this was our first tour of duty.

Now the emergency has been declared and people are either volunteering or for some other reason they're going on active duty. It opened the door to going active duty if you had a commission. I'm not sure exactly when that emergency was declared. I think it was '39. Anyway, I was Inactive Reserve but that didn't make any difference. I didn't have anything to do. And when I heard that they were ordering people for active duty I put in for active duty and got in fairly fast.

OEO: For the record, your commissioning certificate is signed by Captain Chester Nimitz, U.S. Navy, Acting Secretary of the Navy.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes. That's typed in. The printed form says "Secretary of the Navy" and then they didn't black that out but they typed in "Acting" on the side. Maybe they were commissioning so many that the Secretary of the Navy said, "Hey, you aren't doing anything. Sign some of these". More likely, he was an interim for a short period. That is one of the Navy things I treasure, along with my Captain's commission.

OEO: Talk about *USS Castor*; what she was and what was her history. This is your first Navy ship.

CAPT PHILLIPS: She had been somewhere in the reserve fleet and was still fitted with booms and all the tackle you need to offload cargo. I assumed she hauled some kind of cargo. There was still a lot of ballast because she rode well. She was designated AKS-1, a Stores Issue Ship. They took her away from the New York and Cuban Mail Steamship Company – and it was on a regular run at that time – and it used to be called the Ward Line. They changed the name of the shipping company because of the infamous passenger ship *Morro Castle* that ran from New York to Havana regularly. They had a fire aboard off the Jersey coast and that was some fire. The Merchant Marine got a bad name because "Mates and engineers first, passengers next." The officers and crew were getting off and the ship was burning. They went ashore along the New Jersey shore. The *Morro Castle* left a terrible name for the Merchant Marine they did a lousy job. They didn't apparently know how to fight a fire and it was out of hand so they said, "we better get in one of the lifeboats while we still have them". It got a lot of publicity so that was the reason the steamship company was changed from the Ward Line to the New York and Cuban Mail Steamship Company. You can read about the *Morro Castle* in shipwreck books.

OEO: About this time you met some nice lady that caused you to think about getting married. How did that all take place?

CAPT PHILLIPS: When we left Brooklyn Navy Yard the first place we went was Norfolk. I was up on deck one day and the doctor was there. He said, "Look at that, terrible." It was a medical guard flag. It was showing what ship had the medical guard. I said, "So what." He said, "Well I've got a date tonight." I said, "Doc, I'm your shipmate. I'll take care of your date. Just give me the keys to your car." "Will you?" he said, "Of course, I'm your shipmate." Anyway, she became my wife. When I met her she was a college graduate and working in Hoffheimer's basement in Norfolk. Hoffhiemers was a clothing store. We went out and had a wonderful time and we starting dating. By the time we left we were engaged. I bought a big diamond ring, as big as I could afford then, gave it to her and turned over my bank account to her.

OEO: How much time between meeting her and getting engaged?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Maybe two weeks or something like that. Her mother and father were there. They knew what was going on. We were married August 17, 1941. I had orders to the *USS Ramsay* home ported in Hawaii. At that time, if you were assigned to a home ported ship in

Hawaii, your dependents could come. Everything was above board. She was ready to come to Pearl; practically on her way but I hadn't reported aboard. I was still on *Castor*.

We had made the trip out to - this was two months before the War started - we made the trip out to Wake Island. We had offloaded our stores cargo in Hawaii. We proved the concept that ships would come to us instead of going to the supply department, and we would move to an advanced base in time of war. After we offloaded the stores, they brought aboard about 200 Marines for us to take to Wake Island. The Marines had groups ready to go; Marine Defense Groups I think it was. They were enlisted men that were trained to handle a rifle primarily.

We weren't equipped to handle passengers. We didn't have 200 berths so we put 200 folding cots in Number 4 Hold. On the way to Wake Island when I relieved the watch one night the guy on watch said, "I'm running that bilge pump. It's pumping on Number 4 Hold", he said, "but it's flooded." I said, "Oh?" He said, "I'm not picking up suction." I said, "I relieve you". And I turned to a chief that was there that I knew and I said, "You've got this watch. You maintain the watch. Keep the bilge pump running." I went back to Number 4 Hold and I was sick to my stomach. What had happened; Number 4 Hold was formerly a big deep tank so that they could fill with fuel to go around the world without having to buy fuel. Anyway, when they put the covers back and dogged it down, they made storerooms down there and painted them. Now it's a storeroom instead of a fuel tank. They put the hatches back and flooded that for stability going to Wake. If we were going back to the states they probably wouldn't have done it. But they dogged it down so when the ship rolls, a little water runs out and it lies over there and then a little more would come, so when you get in the hold you're that deep in water. Here are almost 200 Marines with their gear; their socks, their bayonet sabers, their shoes, their shirts; everything, and they were sleeping on folding cots. They were clutching their gear and holding on for dear life when I showed up. One of their officers was there because that's the way Marine officers work, and I said, "I'll work on it." In the corner of each hold there was a small space you had to crawl through to get to a perforated box called a rose box with a 4 inch pipe flowing into it. The rose box prevents you from pumping big stuff and that was clogging it up. So I cleaned it out and did the best I could and got the stuff on up out of the way. Then I'd move to the next corner of the room and do the same thing; bail it out, get it out of there. By then the pump was starting to pump and we lowered the water level considerably. I did that the whole watch; going from corner to corner, because I knew the piping system. I knew it like the back of my hand because that was one of the things we learned on the school ship; you'd trace out a system. About that time the Navy came out with a color-coding system that was even better. Anyway, that's how I spent the watch. They were a grateful bunch of Marines and by that time I looked like one of them. We wore khakis on watch. We didn't wear a regular uniform. That was how we got to Wake Island with the Marines. That miserable night for them was nothing compared to what awaited them at Wake a few months later.

Wake Island was a refueling stop for the Pan American Airline China Clippers. They had a hotel there. The Navy had one air group there. There was a lot going on and a lot of contractors; maybe 150 to 200 contractors.

From Wake we went back to the West Coast for another load and arrived at Pearl Harbor on the 6th of December 1941. I was to transfer to *USS Ramsay* as soon as we arrived. The crew

offloaded my car which I had been allowed to bring to my new duty station and away I went to report to *Ramsay*. I drove around to Pearl City to Middle Lock which was right close to the *Ramsay* and parked my car there on the beach. It's the 6th of December now. A whaleboat came and picked me up and that was when I met the other officers of the *Ramsay*. When I went aboard they all welcomed me like I was an old buddy. I thought, "Gee, this is a friendly ship." Then they said, "What's your date of rank", and I said, "August '39". They said, "Oh, damn!" What had happened; they were out of berths for ensigns so the junior ensign slept on the settee in the wardroom. They were disappointed that I was senior to all of them because they were all 90-day wonders. But they were a good bunch.

OEO: How did that car fair on December 7?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Minor damage to the steering. I shipped it back to the mainland and we drove it for many years.

OEO: Doug, we are in Pearl Harbor. You're in *USS Ramsay* and you reported on the 6th of December, 1941. Let's go into the next day and tell me what you were doing that morning if you remember.

CAPT PHILLIPS: I remember very well what I was doing. It was my first day aboard. It was a beautiful sunny day. I was up and had breakfast - first one in the Wardroom. Then I was up on deck admiring the scenery and was pretty happy. Then in about three minutes I saw planes coming over and finally it dawned on me that those were Japanese planes, and they came very, very close to the *Ramsay*. They were lined up to torpedo the *Utah*. The *Utah* berth was one of their designated targets. A spy had sent a map to Tokyo showing the location of the ships in Pearl Harbor, so they had an exact spot for the carriers and battleships and other ships they decided to take out. In a matter of minutes after the attack started our running boat was coming back; one of our whaleboats was coming back with some cargo. They later testified that they had been under fire by the planes that were going toward the *Utah*. Anyway, that boat got aboard. We had the Ready Duty starting at 0800 which meant we had the steam up. I was up on deck. I didn't go in the engine room because it was a different plant altogether and I figured I'd be in the way and I thought I could do something on deck. I knew a little bit about what was going on. We had some 4-inch rapid fire guns that were installed on the galley deckhouse.

In the meantime the planes were successful in getting several torpedoes into the *Utah* and we watched there dumbfounded just a short distance away to see the *Utah* battleship roll over in a matter of minutes after the first attack. The *Utah* was an old battleship being used as a target vessel. They had planks or beams; 8-by-8s or 7-by-7s, on deck and they would bomb it. The Navy bombers would practice on it. They could bomb it with inert bombs and that's what it was used for primarily but it was configured as a battleship. The Japanese thought - we were told - that that was a carrier berth so that's why they went after the old *Utah*. We watched in amazement as she rolled over right in front of us with men falling off, because as the ship rolled it wasn't buttoned up at all. They didn't have time to close watertight doors. As it rolled the crew couldn't stand up after a little while. They were coming off the ship and these timbers that had not been attached to the deck started rolling off when the men were coming off. I understand why they had some casualties. That was the introduction. In the meantime, a midget submarine had gotten in. When they opened the harbor entrance gate for the early departure of a ship, one of

the midget submarines sneaked in. The midget submarines; there were several of them that were brought to the harbor entrance waters just previous without the U.S. knowing it. I think there were two men per submarine. The one that got inside Pearl Harbor came up near our anchorage and the *Curtis* threw a smoke bomb to mark where they last saw the periscope. By that time I went up on the galley deckhouse where there was a 4-inch gun on either side. I had earlier been a loader as an enlisted man so I knew a little bit about it. The Captain called back from the bridge and said, "Is that gun loaded", because we had started to train up. He said, "Is that gun loaded?" I thought he said, "Load it." I was in new whites. I grabbed a shell out of the case - all our ammunition was at the ready - and loaded it and got an enlisted man there and said, "Come on, get aboard here". He sat in the other side and we trained around and depressed it to where we would fire at this target if we had to. Low and behold, right as we lined up our sights the Navy hospital was in the background so we knew enough not to try that shot. By that time we couldn't see anything. The smoke pot had left a mark but we couldn't be sure what we were shooting at. But the Captain just said, "Is that gun loaded"? All I heard was, "Load", and I did it.

Later, we got orders to get underway and we went out on a couple of different missions. One was to steam back and forth with another ship toward the entrance where we would set up enough underway noise to keep the Japanese from laying torpedoes in the entranceway where you have to slow down and it would be an easy target. We had that duty for several hours and then they got someone else to do that. For the next several days, until the following Wednesday; we went out on what we called "Witch Hunts". We steamed Darken Ship and had ammunition at the ready. We were under condition watches - every gun wasn't manned at that time - and we went out on these "Witch Hunts" to the other islands, among other places. Then on the following Wednesday we came back in and we were horrified at the destruction. During the attack we had been on the opposite side of Ford Island from the battleships so we didn't see the damage going out. We were intent on going out because one Japanese plane flew right over us. If he had found us in the channel or sunk us there we would have fouled up the channel. Anyway, we got out okay. We did the sound business for a while and then went on these "Witch Hunts". During those patrols we dropped a number of depth charges. We had a crude sound detection system which would show deflection on a meter if there was any kind of an anomaly. When we got a good contact we assumed it was a submarine and let go with the depth charges. The following Wednesday when we came back in we saw the amount of damage. Everybody was very gun shy. Not many of us went ashore.

OEO: Do you remember about how long the attack was going on?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, it went on for a little over an hour and then they came with the second wave. So it was all over by 10 o'clock; they were all on their way back to their carrier groups to the North.

OEO: What do you remember about that two hour period? What was happening on your ship?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We first put the other boiler on the line so that we had two boilers. And we stood by weapons. We had machine guns in the foredeck; in the main deck space where you go off and on the ship. We had two machine guns there and they fired at the torpedo bombers that took out the *Utah*. Mostly we wanted to get moving, "What are we waiting for? We're ready to

go.” Finally, about the time it ended – it was still going on briefly as we got underway – we got a glimpse of the other side of Ford Island at that time. The two hours goes in a hurry when you’re running around doing things and so on. Anyway, we did that high speed sweep thing, running up and down either side of the ship channel just making noise to interfere with submarine listening devices.

OEO: What was your impression of your skipper’s performance during these two hours?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Very good. Lieutenant Commander Gelzer Sims. He and the Exec conferred about what to do. He was a real leader, a gentleman of the old school. He later commanded the *USS Maury* at Midway and was a Navy Cross winner.

OEO: Were there any outstanding things with the rest of the crew that come to mind?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We were still at battle stations all that time because it kind of diminished but then it picked up again after the first hour. We were on battle stations, which was ready to man any and all guns we had which weren’t very many. After we’d fired extensively on the planes going for the *Utah* it was pretty quiet. Most of the planes we saw were too high for us to handle and neither of the bigger guns were for anti-aircraft. They were surface guns. Under a situation like that the time goes quickly. We were just standing by saying, “Why don’t they give us orders? Why don’t they give us orders?” We were ready to go. By that time there was no question about what was going on in the Pearl Harbor area. As it quieted down the Exec came down the deck and I saluted and said, “Sir, I’m a Reserve officer. I volunteered for active duty a little over a year ago. I’m ready to go home now”. I was being a wise guy of course. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, “No, we’d like to have you stick around for a little bit.”

The Captain told a story after we settled down and went back in port. He said he met an old admiral friend and the admiral said to him, “Well Captain, how many Jap subs have you sunk out there”, and he said, “Admiral, we made some attacks. Some were pretty good, others we couldn’t tell. I can’t honestly say that we sunk any.” The admiral said, “Let me shake your hand. You are the first honest destroyer skipper I’ve met since this damn war has started.” That is what a lot of ships did. It was easy to do. You make an attack and think its good but a lot of them weren’t. So we operated that way. We went over to one of the other islands and patrolled in there mostly looking for Jap submarines because at that time we didn’t know how many were loose in there. We operated in and around Pearl Harbor for several weeks.

After the first of the year, we got orders to Pago Pago, Samoa. We were with another ship plus the hospital ship, so we were in a convoy of three ships. We got a good contact enroute but it went away and we never had a chance to drop depth charges. At Pago Pago they sent a working party ashore up into the jungle where there were a whole bunch of mines stored; World War I vintage mines. We had to get a truck and haul them down and set them up because we were going to lay mines. They had been stored away for just such an emergency I guess. We mined American Samoa and then we had enough to drop some mines over on British Samoa. Finally, we went further west and spent a lot of time in Suva. In Fiji there is a nice port but Suva has a wonderful natural anchorage just a few miles from Suva Proper. That was going to be the fleet anchorage, and we were going to mine that. We did drop some mines in the channels near Suva

but they cancelled the mining operation for the area that was going to be the future anchorage because the war was moving forward. We moved on to Efate in the New Hebrides Islands, and laid a few mines there and then that was all of them. Later in the year, in the summer, we came back to Pearl and not long after, got orders to the Aleutians.

OEO: Stepping back, when you went back into Pearl after a few days of maneuvers outside the channel you then went over and anchored on the side of Ford Island where the battleships were. What could you see from that position?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Not too much because the island was in between us but we knew some of the ships were still burning. There was some smoke coming up. We didn't see the whole thing. We saw a good view of it as we came in the harbor and hung a left to go to Middle Lock. We saw enough to know that the battleships had rolled over. Our flagship; the *Ogallala*, had sunk and it was alongside another ship. The torpedo wound up sinking the *Ogallala* which was the Minecraft Battle Force flagship. She was on her side. Coming back in the devastation was all there for everybody to see.

OEO: Did you go ashore at all?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Not at that time. I had other things to do and I don't think generally liberty was granted. I forget what our operations were in detail but I didn't go ashore. We had different missions to carry out. One was the French Frigate Shoals. As you go up the chain toward Midway there is a series of islands and refuges. There was a place up there called French Frigate Shoals. It was a tiny, tiny island with about 15 Marine lookouts and a radio. They didn't leave them up there very long. We were taking a fresh bunch of replacements. It was a very small island. Anyway, before we went up, the Exec called me up on the bridge and said, "We've got to be able to make Wake Island. How much speed can we do going up and back and still have enough; 25 percent of our fuel"? I said, "I'll tell you shortly. I'll be right back." I figured it out accurately in my opinion and it turned out that we could do it at 15 knots which was our cruising speed. We had a cruising combination and we could cruise at that speed; 15 knots or so, for a long time and that would use less fuel. Later on in the day I told him what I came up with. He accepted that. We got underway and not long afterward I made a tour of all the engineering spaces. The first thing I noticed was that they had rung up more than 15 knots which meant we were on the main engine combination. This concerned me because that wasn't what I had talked to the Exec about. I went up to the bridge and said, "Sir, are we going to keep this speed up right on continuously?" He put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "Yes Chief, if it's alright with you we will." I said, "Its fine with me but at 2:35 tomorrow morning we're going to be out of fuel and dead in the water", which was a gross exaggeration but that's the kind of stuff I pulled. I saluted and walked away and he said, "Hey, hey, come back here."

What had happened . . . we were one of the four-stackers that was direct drive, no reduction gear. We had an impulse turbine instead of a reaction turbine. We had a huge impulse turbine with 43 stages after a couple of impulse stages. We burned a lot more fuel at the higher speed because we were on the main combination rather than the cruising speed. Anyway, we got that straightened out in hurry. They were ringing up x-number of turns and that would respond in the engine room, but the thing got out of step. It was a step by step thing, very mechanical - no electronics or

anything – and that was out of step. They would ring up a number but the wrong number would show up in the engine room and it showed knots, speed and turns above speeds required for 15 knots. That was an early lesson I learned. I was not too bright then I guess. I went overboard when I told them that we'd be dead in the water. We weren't going to be dead in the water. I wanted to know what we were doing and I wanted them to know what was going on, and then it all got straightened out. They found out there was a general order that required the officer the deck to call the engine room and verify that those two numbers were the same and that hadn't been done. That had been lost in the shuffle somewhere. That's how we got going faster than I had said we could do using the cruising combination.

We had these Marines aboard. I'll tell you, that island - except for the Goony Birds - it was just a big pile of sand, but they had a radio station there and that's about all they could take of it. So we put the new batch on and came back. But that was my trip to French Frigate Shoals. If you look at a chart, it's almost halfway from French Frigate up to Midway.

OEO: Did you become the Chief Engineer when you reported aboard?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, I relieved a lieutenant (jg) who was Engineer Officer. They had also lost their assistant engineer. Thus, there was an opening for an assistant engineer and as soon as we went through the turnover process I was the engineer officer.

OEO: I understood you to say earlier you had never been exposed to that particular engineering system in the *Ramsay*.

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, but it was easy because all that was missing from the ships I was familiar with was a reduction gear. Most ships have a double reduction gear and that gets the turns for the propeller down. The problem is the propeller is efficient at one speed and the turbine is efficient at a much higher speed so they do it with a reduction gear. *Ramsay* did it with a different turbine. Instead of an impulse turbine it was a reactive turbine. I think it was the longest engine I had ever seen. It was easy to shift from the cruising turbine and the main turbine on the starboard side and bypass, in effect, the other turbine which would have put us both in the same type of turbine and the same purpose. When they rang up a number that was the number of turns that the propeller was to make in effect. We knew from cables we had what that speed would give under normal circumstances. Other than that it was straightforward. It had the same type of boiler and auxiliary machinery and so on. What wasn't there was the reduction gear which means that you have to carry the right lube oil for that machinery; for the bearings and gears.

OEO: Let's talk about the class of ship. Four-stacker? What's the official title?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Four-stackers or flush-deckers. The older destroyers had a raised bow. They were called four-stackers or four-pipers. They were built for World War I. The Navy had its ups and downs and during one its downs they put ships out of commission and they had them tied up in various ports. If a ship was needed for anything – say another was damaged – they had that class ship in the Reserve Fleet. Some were used and some were not. They did start converting some to seaplane tenders, high speed attack transports for the Marines, and various other side jobs. The majority of them were converted to minelayers which was easy to do. All they had to

do was take off the torpedo tubes – originally we had four torpedo tubes – and in place of those they put rails down the main deck on either side that would carry the mine track. Then we had another construction feature that we could put inside the mine tracks that would carry the depth charges. The mines wouldn't be in the way.

OEO: Did you regularly carry depth charges and mines?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No. We would load the mines wherever we were operating out of but generally we had a certain number of depth charges that was our limit. If we used a lot of depth charges, we would replenish at the next port call.

OEO: How many four-stackers were built?

CAPT PHILLIPS: In the hundreds.

OEO: Were most of those re-commissioned when World War II started?

CAPT PHILLIPS: A lot of them were. They were converted to different types of auxiliary duty. Plus, 50 right off the top went to Great Britain and that was a lend/lease program where we got Bermuda, Trinidad and some other places on a wartime basis, so they weren't given to us purposely. They were moving them all the time. It was hard to tell because they had different demands and you never saw very many of them. Some of them were sold; maybe the older ones were sold and they converted them to banana boats. They would run them high speed. They put a diesel in them and ran them high speed with green bananas rather than something that had been in cold storage for a while. I saw one in New Orleans. Here was a destroyer with no stacks except for a diesel engine and they were carrying bananas for United Fruit or one of those companies.

OEO: While you were still in *Ramsay* did you get back to Pearl Harbor after you left that first time?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We came back and then got orders to the Aleutians. By the time we got up there most of the ships - the *San Francisco* was one - most of the ships had left the Aleutians; from operations, because the Japanese had gone and they didn't need all those ships up there. They needed someone like us because we ran errands and we did all kinds of odd jobs. We only laid a few new experimental magnetic mines and I never knew what happened to those. One night we were going to go to Kiska with two torpedo boats; the wooden torpedo boats. We were going to tow them up within a certain distance and they were going to release their torpedoes at the ships in the harbor and get the hell out of there, but in order to do that they had to have kind of a head start by us towing them up there. Not long after the tow started - we were doing alright – they cancelled the operation because the Japs had abandoned Kiska, so that ended that. But that was an interesting thing to watch.

OEO: You were there when the battle of Attu took place?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We got one Battle Star for it. We provided gun cover if they needed it and we were in the chain. We didn't have any other people aboard but we were in the area by Massacre Bay after the landing and it settled down a little bit. That was a helluva battle up there. We lost a lot of men. We lost essentially over 800 men and it was screwed up something bad because these guys went up there in uniforms to go to North Africa and here they are up in the Aleutians.

We spent quite a bit of time up there. We went up to the Aleutians twice. The first time was after they removed one boiler. We went back to the states and they removed one boiler so now we're a three-stacker, and in its place they put an 80,000 gallon fuel tank. That gave us extended endurance, because most of our operations weren't going at high speed. Now we're a three-stacker but we can still do most of the things they wanted. One time we came alongside a tanker and I yelled to one of the officers that was rigging to transfer fuel to us, I said, "Do you have any 2190T lube oil?" He said, "Yeah, but that's for the Fleet." I said, "Dammit Man, we are the Fleet!" The next thing I know the Captain asked me to come to the bridge. He said, "Hey, be nice to these guys. We're trying to get some food from them." I said, "Aye, aye." Anyway, we finally got a drum of 2190T, but we needed it. We were out. We would really be in trouble if we ran out of lube oil because there was an additive in it. We did re-circulate that oil through a cream separator type centrifuge and reconstituted it.

OEO: How much time would you say that you spent up in the Aleutians near Attu and Kiska?

CAPT PHILLIPS: On two different cruises, a total of roughly eight months. They used us for running errands and things like that so we were handy to have. We had no division commander near us and the Captain was it. He would get orders through the task force commander to go and do what we had to do. We were kind of a messenger boy. You do what you were told to do.

OEO: Did you get ashore at Attu?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, I never went ashore. I had no desire to go ashore. It's a lousy piece of real estate as far as I'm concerned but we paid a price for it. It was big news being early in the war and a landing to attack the Japanese practically in our backyard, and on our soil.

The navigation charts were old, old charts. Some only had one track that some minesweeper or someone had made years ago just to have some chart with some depths on it because we knew so little about it. That was a problem. We lost one ship and I knew the people on it. When they made the landings on Amchitka there was a transport that came in during a storm. When their bow came down there was a pinnacle in the middle of the harbor and they landed on the pinnacle. Most merchant ships have a separate fire room and engine room and so on but this was a big merchant ship and the generators, boilers, engine and everything was in one big compartment. Once they flooded it they used the main circulator to de-boiler it. But the main circulator got clogged up with debris because they were right on the bottom, so the main circulator went out. Also, they didn't have any generator. They got most of the men off but some stayed as ship keepers. Finally they got a salvage outfit there and pumped out enough to save the ship. They went through a regular salvage operation because it was a brand new ship, the *African Comet*. Earlier we had been somewhere in the Pacific and the *African Comet* had sent a message looking for a certain fitting for their lathe and it sounded like something we had. I got permission

from the Captain to take it over; get the boat and go over and see, and all they said was, “No, this won’t do. But thank you. You’re the only ship that responded to us.” Then later some of those officers were the same ones when the ship went aground at Amchitka. Anyway, we and a destroyer had the task of towing them - they got a seagoing tug in there – towing them back to Dutch Harbor where they did some more work on it. Most of the work they did out of the chain. They didn’t have everything they needed to really get it ready for shipyard overhaul because everything was damaged. Everything had been exposed to saltwater.

OEO: You towed that ship to Dutch Harbor. Towing out there was pretty tricky, wasn’t it?

CAPT PHILLIPS: It was, and speed of advance was only about three knots. One bright sunny day we picked up a contact and the destroyer that had better gear than we did hadn’t picked it up. At three knots, if there had been a submarine he would have had a field day. Our detection equipment we had was very rudimentary.

After my second period up in the Aleutians, I got my orders to PG (Post Graduate) School when we were in Adak. I had put in for it much earlier. My first skipper on the *Castor* was working in BUSHIPS and I asked him to follow on my PG School request. I said, “I haven’t heard anything.” He followed up on it and I got orders to PG School. They took Naval Academy graduates that had a BS degree. I had no degree. Differential Calculus was a requirement. So, while I was in San Francisco the first time after the war started I went up and renewed my Chief Engineer’s license. I had a Second’s license and I’d been serving as Engineer Officer on the *Ramsay* so the Coast Guard credited me for that and issued me a Chief Engineer’s license. I had a Chief’s license within five years of graduating. I went to the University of California and they had a correspondence course in Differential Calculus, and my new assistant right out of the Naval Academy had been a math major in some college and had lots of math at the Naval Academy. When I got stuck on a problem in calculus I’d say, “Hey Mark, come here.” Anyway, I got into PG School. I started out like a ball of fire but they got ahead of me pretty soon because a lot of courses were new. It was a struggle.

OEO: Why do think the Navy allowed you to go to PG School in the middle of the War?

CAPT PHILLIPS: They kept the school going. In our class there were only ten regulars and five Reserves. What they wanted to do was keep engineers coming along because they combined marine engineering and naval construction. Once there was a Naval Construction Corps and then they went back to it finally. We were Engineering Duty Officers and that means you could have been a naval architect or a marine engineer. Invariably the new PG School graduates put a new ship in commission right off the bat. That is exactly what happened to me. My father-in-law; my wife’s father and her mother, took us to dinner somewhere in Annapolis and they introduced me to Captain Mallard who was the prospective commanding officer of the *Bremerton* that I was getting orders to. He was known as “Ducky” Mallard. That’s what his classmates called him. I never called him that. But it was Ducky Mallard. He was quite a guy. I enjoyed working for him.

Anyway, I’m leaving the Aleutians going to PG School for 18 months and then back to sea, or to put the *Bremerton* in commission. *Bremerton* was built in Trenton across the river from the Philadelphia Navy Yard so we had to move from the shipbuilder’s yard to the Navy Yard where

we went in commission and went out to the Pacific. By that time the war had ended. We were a new ship and all the other ships had been there for years so we got a lot of work to do because we had no complaint about where they sent us. These other ships that were leaving had been there in battles and at sea for a long time. I was a year and a half in that job. Originally I was Assistant Engineer. The Chief Engineer was 15 days senior to me. There was nothing I could do about that. He got out on points right away and I took over as Chief Engineer and that was no problem. I knew what I had to do and it was a full time job.

OEO: Before we get into the *Bremerton* tour are there any other recollections about December 7, 1941 and Pearl Harbor?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Oh, there were a lot of stories going around. One comes to mind. The Officer of the Deck, when the attack started, sounded General Quarters and the Captain came up on deck and said, "Who sounded General Quarters?" The OOD said, "I did Sir." And Captain said, "I'm the only one that gives the order to General Quarters". And the kid said, "Yes Sir. But those are Japanese planes. And Sir, I have to go to my battle station." The Captain didn't know there was an attack. That is the kind of thing that went on because naturally there was a lot of confusion.

OEO: How many officers were in the *Ramsay* wardroom?

CAPT PHILLIPS: A dozen. We had a doctor for a while but they transferred him because we had one doctor for the whole squadron. A lot of the ensigns coming aboard. Usually an ensign went aboard a battleship for a year and a half. Here the ensigns getting out of the Naval Academy were reporting for duty and some of them wound up as heads of departments as soon as they came aboard. The skipper was a Lieutenant Commander and the Executive Officer and navigator were both Lieutenants. We had a pretty tight wardroom.

We used to run out of food regularly. One time we were running out of food and our main course was Vienna sausage; little bitty Vienna sausage. We had them for breakfast, lunch, anytime of day; Vienna sausage. The irony of it is my mother knew I liked Vienna sausage and one Christmas she sent me Vienna sausage. The mess wanted to make me Mess Treasurer. I told them, "If you elect me Mess Treasurer the first thing we're going back to is Vienna sausage", so someone else got Mess Treasurer.

When we went into Efate we saw a bunch of cows. They weren't very pretty cows. The Exec called the Commissary Steward or the Mess Officer, and he said, "Go over there and see if you can buy one of those cows." And the guy went over there and they made a deal for a cow. He bought a cow and butchered it. Well you don't just shoot them or kill them and eat them. You hang them for a while. We started eating beef the same day that he bought it. All we had was a walk-in refrigerator on the main deck, on the quarterdeck almost. We sold some so the crew. We bought another cow before we left and it was tough but it was meat and it beat what we were eating; Vienna sausage.

OEO: Any more on Pearl Harbor on December 7th?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The real aftermath story of Pearl Harbor was the salvage work. They did one heck of a job getting those ships together and pumped out. They had a lot of good divers all ready to go and they had the equipment. That is one of the best stories of World War II, the rapidity of getting things back together. The Japanese really screwed up. There are two tank farms on the edge of Pearl. They didn't bother them. And there was an ammunition depot. If you come in the harbor you hang a left and that's West Lock. You go there and unload your ammo if you're going in for ship's overhaul. We were lucky being at a mooring but the other four ships in our division were in for an overhaul and they lost men because the Navy Yard and all that area was bombed. We were the lucky ones. We saw those planes come down to sink the *Utah*. From then on they were high and we were using machine guns. Someone gave me a BAR (Browning automatic rifle) but I didn't know how to work it. The problem with our guns; they weren't for airplanes, they were for surface shooting. Shooting at an airplane flying by with a machine gun is kind of difficult. Anyway, we avoided any casualties where we were. They were busy at other places. The Japs should have been after the tank farms and the ammunition depot.

On one of the Pearl Harbor anniversary trips I was on a bus with Pearl Harbor survivors and authors of various books and historians as well as several Japanese aviators that flew on December 7th. One of the Japanese had his wife and daughter and her daughter's husband. I had earlier purchased a large Japanese flag and had pictures of the flag with me. I went to the daughter of this pilot, because he didn't speak any English, and told her my story and showed her the pictures and they told me what the flag was. It has a lot of names on it for one thing and it's also got some brown spots. It is silk and in good shape. They said when a guy was going off to war they would have a party for him and they would all sign the Japanese flag. They would sign all their names and wish him well and then he would wear it on his person.

OEO: You got orders from *Ramsay* to Post Graduate School in 1943. How long was the course and what diploma did you receive?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We completed the course in 18 months. We received a Naval Engineering Design diploma. It was what a person would take in an engineering college, but accelerated because we were at war. At that time, the PG School was located at the Naval Academy in Halligan Hall. The students were sent to other schools like MIT for certain post graduate courses. Naval constructors went to MIT. We had some excellent mechanical engineers and most of them were electricians. Our best professor of all was one in metallurgy and I learned more about metallurgy than I knew existed. Frankly, I didn't do well in PG School but they graduated me anyway. We immediately got orders to sea and that's when I got orders to the *Bremerton*. I was promoted to Lieutenant while there at school.

OEO: Let's go to *USS Bremerton* now. Where was she when you reported?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Trenton, New Jersey at the New York Shipbuilding Company. Construction was just about finished. They were assembling a crew and I was part of the new crew that was going to be aboard. Not long after that we moved across the river to the Philadelphia Navy Yard where we finalized our fitting out and were commissioned. We went from there off to war.

OEO: When you got to Bremerton you'd been in the Navy about three years.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, but I had three years in the Merchant Marine too.

OEO: You reported aboard as the Assistant Engineer?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, I forget how my orders were written but this is what it was. They already had an engineer and I think they appointed him before I came into the picture. They sent us up to the Casco Bay (Maine) area where they had planes and targets and so on and we were supposedly developing techniques to combat Jap Zeros. They were taking a terrible toll. All I knew is what I learned from the ordnance officer who was a friend of mine. We were doing all sorts of different trials that someone devised to be able to combat Kamikaze attacks. We spent some time up there and then we went to Rio de Janeiro as part of our shakedown cruise. The war had slowed down quite a bit so they could afford to send us on a halfway decent shakedown cruise. When we finished that we went through the Canal and joined the Fleet out in the Pacific. I later left the ship in Saipan. We were all over the Pacific and it was a wonderful experience. We were in the Philippines when they got their independence; a very important day for the Philippines. It was July 4th, 1946. They had a ceremony and I was impressed because we were invited to the Presidential Palace; several of us, and we sat up in the balcony watching this fancy ball. The Ambassador was there; McNutt, and a lot of famous people. It was a big, big, function for them because we had postponed their independence. They were going to get it early in the War or just before the War but we didn't want them swinging in the breeze as a result of the Japanese invasion. It was a wonderful experience for me except for the worst thing that happened. Dugout Doug flew in from Tokyo. He came in to this formal affair with his sleeves rolled up and he looked like hell. All his aides were in the same condition; they just got off the plane. I expected of him, for a ceremony like that, to have taken the time to put on a decent uniform. He walked in there and they loved him. They didn't care what he was wearing. I was surprised at that because I'd heard a lot about General McArthur and here I'm sitting in the balcony watching him come in with his staff and he had his pipe with him and the whole thing. It was fascinating to me just to watch and think in terms of history what was going on in front of me. For that event we had an admiral aboard; Admiral Thomas G. W. Settle. He was the Task Force Commander, flying his flag from *Bremerton*. He had set a record in free ballooning in the '30s. He was in that part of aviation and he got famous. He was a wonderful guy. Admiral Settle was a gentleman of the old school. They'd be passing the word that the Admiral was leaving the ship and you'd go up there and he'd say, "Oh no, don't make any fuss". They had this rate of giving him side boys and the whole thing. But he was great and became a good friend. He was like family. Tommy Settle. In fact, I think the Admiral gave my wife a piano.

By that time I'd moved up. I was the head of the department as Chief Engineer and I also stood the deck duty. Captain Mallard put me through the paces and he said, "We're going to make you Deck Officer too", and the classification was DEM (Deck and Engineering Merchant Marine Naval Reserve). Then after I was accepted into the Regular Navy I was just Captain, USN, period, just like any other captain. My only problem was I hadn't had communications, gunnery and all that stuff that they all had. So I got smart and applied for engineering duty only because that's what I knew and I wasn't going to compete down the line with someone that had all that other experience. The Navy had trouble getting engineers. A lot of the engineers we were using were ex-enlisted men that got commissions, because the average Naval Academy graduate, from

my experience, if they could avoid it stayed away from the engine room. They had to do a certain amount generally as part of their qualification. When I was Chief Engineer on both ships all four of my division officers were ex-enlisted men; lieutenants, lieutenant (jg's), and they were temporary, and later on I found that some of them on the next ship I went on couldn't wait to get back to Chief.

During that Hong Kong stay one day I found myself in a situation where everybody was ashore and I had the duty. I was up on the quarterdeck. We were moored to a buoy with a portside anchor chain and the other anchor was housed. I heard what sounded like a gun going off and someone passed the word that the anchor chain had broken. On my way up forward I met the ship's carpenter who was a warrant officer and an officer that I respected. Anyway, this bang goes off and I walk up there thinking, "Wow, do I remember how to slip all that stuff?" I solemnly said, "You're going to drop the other anchor?" "Yes Sir". And off I went. I went to the engine room and had trouble with one of the men. I told him what to do. I said, "We're getting underway. We do this, this and this." He said, "We have to take longer to warm up. We can't do it that fast. "We can this time because it's an emergency". I didn't know how far we were going drift even after they got the anchor down and also didn't know the water depths. Anyway, that was my experience of the broken chain in a harbor with sunken ships all around. Later on when I went to the Boston Navy Yard where they made ship's Navy chain I got them to get the record of it. The ship had sent them the failed link and so many feet either side of it. They got the record out and what they had found under microscopic examination was a fold – what they call a fold – in the forging process. Instead of the metal being up to heat to compress it and make a uniformed cross sectional area, it had a fold in it so the weld on that side was a half or a quarter of what it would take. What happened in this case – and I know this for a fact – the ship was here, the buoy was here and the chain was coming around the stem. So if you put an abnormal strain on it and load it up it's going to part and that's exactly what happened. But that was a scary experience for me and I just was so happy to see that warrant carpenter - he was a wonderful officer anyway – and I knew that he'd take care of everything because that was his normal station and responsibility. But I didn't know whether he was aboard or where the hell he was until I met him running up the deck with me. When I saw who it was I abandoned my anchor problem. I knew he would handle it. He dropped it and it probably held a lot faster than if I would have gotten it down because there are brakes and chains and stoppers.

OEO: Did *Bremerton* get in any action?

PHILLIPS: No. By the time we got out there the war had ended. We were fresh to the Pacific and everybody else had been out there fighting while we were back going to school and commissioning, so we were useful with what jobs had to be done. They could release these ships with all these men. Their points were up and they wanted to get people back to the states.

It was a good tour up to a point. I finally put in for release from active duty. I'd been a bad boy and I knew I had to go. What had happened; we'd had a whaleboat sink; ran into some debris. The whaleboat flooded and it had a load of diesel in it. It came back to the ship and we had the thing up in the davits. In the course of getting it back in proper running condition I learned that the Exec had overridden my orders to the Auxiliary Division Officer who was responsible for the work. So in a momentary irrational act, I went to the Captain and complained about the Exec's

meddling. I said, “Sir, I can’t do my job. I can’t do the work I’m responsible for if the Exec is going to countermand what I’m trying to do and the men don’t know what to do.” He said, “Oh, You’re putting my Executive Officer on report?” I said, “Oh no Sir.” He brought the Exec in – he said, “The two of you go over in the Executive Officer’s cabin and sort this out”, and the Executive Officer said, “Damn you Phillips, I’ll get you if it’s the last thing I do, period!” Anyway, I thought, “Oh well, I’ve really screwed up now”.

So I put in for terminal leave. I had more leave coming than I knew what to do with. I said, “I’ll go home and look for a job”. My wife was living in Albany, California with two kids, and she was struggling. I started job-hunting and the next thing I now I got a package in the mail with an appointment to the Regular Navy Captain, USN, and ordered to Guantanamo Bay as Repair Officer. I thought, “Boy, I’m going to live now.” Then they changed my orders. They were short of engineers and there was *Oregon City*, another heavy cruiser in Boston and I was assigned as her Engineering Officer. The ship was on limited operations. We had enough people to get underway for a day or two but we didn’t have enough watch standers. We borrowed some from another ship and then when we finally got it straightened out later I told the Exec, “We’ve got to get those men back to their ship.” He said, “Heck with them. We’ll keep them for now.” I had gotten them on my request and justification; I got some extra men for him and I thought I had a responsibility to get them back to their ship. He said, “Na.” Well at that point I decided to cash in my chips. Then they put *Oregon City* out of commission so I was out of a job and got orders to the Boston Navy Shipyard where I was promoted to Captain. The reason I stayed in was because I hoped to make the Navy my permanent career.

One of my favorite letters is from one of the persons on the selection board. He said, “You were outstanding”, and signed it Admiral “So and So”. I saved that because it was the shortest recommendation, or congratulations I’d ever seen in my life, and I’d never worked for him. I didn’t know him from Adam. But he said, “I know how good you are”, or something like that.

OEO: What did you do at the naval shipyard?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was Ship’s Superintendent. We were the guys that coordinated the work between the ship and the shipyard, and were in charge of everything at the ship. We always had a completion date to make. If things weren’t going smoothly we’d go to this meeting and listen to the Captain. The Captain would listen to the Production Officer and tell him what his story was and then the man running the discussion would call on the Ship’s Superintendent and say, “Well what’s the story? What are we doing to get this logjam going”? We were always in the hot seat. They took me off of that job long enough to put the first turbine-driven LST in commission at Boston. They put me on special duty as Chief Engineer for the sea trials.

About that time someone said, “Hey, they want to see you up at the office. You’re being transferred.” I said, “I’m not being transferred.” I had just finished painting my house and finishing the basement. I said, “I just got here a little over a year ago. I’m not going anywhere.” So I went up and had orders to the Naval Boiler and Turbine Laboratory in Philadelphia as Industrial Officer. A set of quarters went with the job so we sold our house and moved into officer’s quarters that had been enlisted men’s quarters in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Now we were testing blowers, particularly looking at the noise level, and at the other end of the yard they

were testing rockets and jet engines. So we sat halfway between the two of them and it drove my wife crazy. Now we're in the Philadelphia Navy Yard where I walked to work and worked for another nice Captain by the name of Shriner. He was an old time engineer. We had some interesting challenges there. We were testing steam turbines for higher power and also had test furnaces for the factory work that goes in a ship's boiler.

After that tour, I got orders to the Bureau of Ships. My job was Project Manager for the *USS Timmerman*; experimental destroyer. They took a Bath built destroyer that was almost finished except for installing the machinery. We were going to put 60,000 shaft horsepower in place of 100,000 shaft horsepower on this class destroyer. There is a standard on design to a big extent in the steam turbine and ship power business. They had lost a lot of time because they had to standardize to get ships built. So now they're saying, "We want you; the builders, to go out on the blue and see if we can gain back some of that time we lost while we were fighting the War and standardizing on everything, and then we'll walk back the cat to what's doable." They had epicyclical reduction gear, the biggest one ever made. It handled 100,000 shaft horsepower. All the turbines went into the same epicyclical gear. All this was under the direction of Admiral Cochrane. It was an interesting job. We were running into all kinds of things.

The Brits knew all about this thing and they sent a letter to the Chief of the Bureau of Ships asking for someone to give a presentation on the *Timmerman*. So it came to my boss. My boss gave it to me. He said, "Well go ahead and write it." It was classified and it was not for the Brits supposedly, but it was classified because the designers wanted it classified. Anyway, they got a letter back from the Brits to the Chief of the Bureau of Ships. "This paper isn't up to our standards", which set me back a little bit. But it got to my boss and he said, "What about this?" I said, "Well I understand it. No problem." He said, "What do you mean? What are you doing about it?" I said, "I've got two file cabinets full of confidential stuff there. If I get into that I can write a paper." He said, "Well what are you waiting for. Let's get going". So I wrote the paper using all the "classified" information. Then I walked it through everybody and they said, "What is this?" I said, "Oh, it's about a ship and it's classified now but it shouldn't be classified and we want to declassify it". Everybody knew what we were building. Every workman in the place knew what was going on. Anyway, I walked it through and they read it and, "Fine." So I kept a paper signed by someone in CNO's office that this was cleared. With that okay the paper was sent to the Brits and they said, "Wonderful, this is what we want." Thus, I was sent to London to give a talk to the Society of Marine Engineers, one of the biggest engineering societies in Britain. At that time, the British Navy had a lot of officers in the society and they were the ones to hear the presentation.

In the meantime, we had a British admiral visit the Bureau of Ships; the Engineering Chief of the Royal Navy. I was called up to the Chief of the Bureau's office one day. He looked me over to see if my shoes were shined and I didn't have ring around the collar or anything. It was the big boss; our Chief of the Bureau of Ships. After looking me over he said, "We want you to be the unofficial temporary aide to Admiral Short, the Engineering Chief of the British Navy." You're going to be aide to him. Wherever he goes you go and you're subject to whatever he does. You just tag along or do what you have to do at the time." So, that's how I got to know Admiral Short. We went to Yellowstone and the West Coast; different shipyards, and the establishments there were all laid out. The aides had laid out a program for him to learn from the Navy what we were doing and apply it as necessary, and it was a wonderful experience. I took

pretty good care of him during his two week tour and he reciprocated when I was in London. Everybody there wanted to listen to the *Timmerman* story.

OSBORN: There must have been a lot of lessons learned.

PHILLIPS: We did learn a lot. Unfortunately the ship was assigned to the Fleet and when we couldn't meet a commitment I said, "Look, we shouldn't be in the active fleet. We should be in a special category of some kind". Every time they got a change of staff at the destroyer complex up in Newport, I had to go up there and tell them what the *Timmerman* was. In the meantime the kindly old gentleman stepped in. You know the kindly old gentleman? Rickover. That's what they called him. He thought the whole test process and management was wrong, and said so in no uncertain terms.

OEO: Was Admiral Rickover the Director of Nuclear Power at that time?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes. He was a tough taskmaster and you had to know the right answer or you didn't get very far with him.

OEO: Did you ever have a direct connection with him?

PHILLIPS: No. The only time I saw him; I went on sea trials on the first nuclear carrier, which was the *Enterprise*. I had the privilege of riding her with the Board of Inspection and Survey for five days. Rickover spent his time in the engineering spaces. I had a lieutenant working for me that was a Rickover protégé. I was a lieutenant commander. He told me that Rickover wanted to know something about me, or who I was or what I was doing, and he said, "I gave him a good report on you". I had taken a nuclear engineering course and knew a little bit about it but not near as much as those people that had been through the whole training program and actually ran the equipment. But there were some things they weren't aware of that came up. Once, something happened and they didn't think to use the main circulating pumps, which run when you are underway. I forget what was going on but they weren't getting cooling water in the condenser and all they had to do was start the pump. I knew enough to help them. I just didn't try to talk to him or discuss things with him. My trial responsibility was for the non-nuclear machinery. Captain Vincent De Poix was the first Skipper of *Enterprise*. He, later, was a three star Admiral.

OEO: Let's go to Service Squadron THREE now.

CAPT PHILLIPS: After I was Project Manager of the *Timmerman* I got orders to Sasebo. The way that happened; I was talking to the detail officer who was a friend of mine and he said, "I've got three officers that claim they're going to resign or retire if we send them to Sasebo." They were naval constructors and they wanted to design and build ships. I went home and told my wife, "I've got it made. I'm going to Sasebo for one year and I can't take the family but then I'll get a tour back in Washington again." She had lived in China. She said, "No, you've got a two-year tour. We'll do it." So we wound up in Sasebo and that was an interesting job. I had several challenges there and enjoyed tackling them because I knew what I was doing.

One was a destroyer that had a vibration going through the length of the ship which was only a year or two old, and we had them in dry dock. We still controlled the largest dry dock there. We also had a special arrangement with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for technical advice and assistance. I asked the MIT guy about alignment and he said, "We can check it right now." He went into one of the struts and checked the alignment. The port shaft had too much clearance. One of the things I had learned at the Boston Navy Yard was how to handle aligning a piece of shafting without having to take into account the catenaries. You put a telescope in the middle of the bore and that's a straight line. There's no sag in it like a taut wire. We went ahead and did it and when we were finally checking it in the end the MIT contact said, "We're going to do the final aligning at night. That's when you do it because the ship's shape changes with the sun on one side and not the other". So we did it at night when theoretically everything was back to normal for that temperature. Everything checked out. I went home to my quarters; to my family, and enroute I got arrested for being out of uniform. Now I'm not going to go down in blues in the dry dock. I was arrested by the shore patrol, because after a certain hour you were supposed to be in the uniform of the day. The next day I told the Admiral, "Well we got it done. Everything went fine except I got put on report", and he was drinking coffee and spilled it. He said, "Damn you Phillips. You're always saying something like that." I told him what happened and nothing ever came of it. I was happy because I had learned in Boston how to do it and that was important.

OEO: What other repair jobs did you have a hand in when you were there in Sasebo?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The toughest one was a light cruiser that had a packing gland problem. The rudder post is probably 15 inches in diameter and with a line of studs around it for a packing gland. It was leaking and had gotten to the point where the leaking was out of control. They kept tightening the bolts and every time they tightened a bolt it failed; the bolt failed due to stress corrosion. We had studied that in PG School. The failure is along the grain lines of the material. Anyway, they were in a bad way. The Admiral called me in – and he was the Service Squadron Commander – and he said, "What do you think?" I said, "I think we ought to dry dock it here. We've got everything in hand and I can't guarantee how much longer those other bolts are going to hold", because they were failing. By that time I had figured it out due to my metallurgy course. Each ship has a shipyard designated for the necessary plans in the ship's records. I didn't know how to take a rudder shaft out. So I got a wire off to the shipyard that had the drawings of the rudder and the assembly - it came in by airmail - and I became an expert because I had drawings. The instructions were very clear. "To install or remove the rudder post, you put dry ice in the vertical shaft and heat the outside in the burner". You have to heat the outside of it from the dry dock. They were heating it one day and I looked inside, no dry ice. I said, "Look". I said, "We've got to do both at the same time; dry ice and then heating the outside." They did that and low and behold they drove the wedge under there and it started coming up. We could take the rudder post out and replace all of the failed studs. That system worked. We put it back together and put new packing in. The trouble in the first place was there was insufficient packing and ordinarily you add a turn of packing. But if you're in the rudder post you better watch out, you might lose control and you've got a large ring that has to be bolted down on top of the packing. That was why I was afraid of it because if anything went wrong they'd say, "Gee, you could have fixed it in Sasebo", or something. But I was ready for it because I knew where to get the

drawings. Anyway, we got it out and got the ship going and they were happy as a clam. They didn't want a situation like that. And it didn't hurt me but I just did what I was being paid to do.

OEO: That is a great story. It shows going through the education process, then experience, more education, more experience, and you combine all that for success on a tough job.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Right, and that's why I was happy staying in. When I first tried to transfer, my score wasn't high enough to be an ED. I was accepted as an Unrestricted Line Officer. Well, I wasn't going to compete with all the people that had gunnery and navigation and all that so I put in for EDO, Engineering Duty Only, and stayed in it. They had trouble getting engineers on Navy ships. For some reason they didn't like that duty. All four of my division officers on both that cruiser and another one were ex-enlisted men with the rank of lieutenant junior grade or lieutenant and they were the division officers. They did a good job except when the war ended they were reverting to their chief status. They were saying, "I want to go back to Chief." They didn't want to be a jg or a lieutenant.

OEO: What other things happened there in that service squadron job that you can remember?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We had a repair ship or destroyer tender on permanent duty there. Once we sailed up to Kobe to help get a ship underway. Some of the wives went by train. We were given an opportunity to go ashore and see another part of Japan with only a short cruise. In those days, to keep the ships happy, each ship that went on an eight or nine-month tour was assured they would get a trip to Hong Kong. Everybody wanted to go to Hong Kong, of course. So I went to Hong Kong so many times I'm tired of seeing the place. But Sasebo was a good place. My wife enjoyed it. She got together with the Japanese women and other American women and they did things

OEO: Was your wife in China before the War?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes. She'd graduated from high school at Shanghi American School. When the war started she was on a Navy ship with her family being evacuated from China. By that time she had enrolled and been accepted for the Lingham University in Canton which is only that far from Hong Kong. Her father was on the Asiatic staff.

OEO: You were in Sasebo 1955 to 1957 and then you're off to Long Beach Naval Shipyard. What was your purpose in life at Long Beach?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was Planning and Estimating Superintendant initially and then they had a big reorganization due to industrial engineering studies. They started out with a new department; Industrial Engineering. They figured they wanted me in that job in Industrial Engineering which I hadn't studied but I knew what they were doing. Then, before I left, the comptroller retired and they didn't have any relief for him so they transferred me up there because this new organization supposedly was getting along alright. I wound up as Comptroller at the shipyard.

OEO: Did you have any financial experience?

CAPT PHILLIPS: None, except my own checkbook. As an aside, there was a serious problem: Long Beach was sinking, literally. Subsidence they call it. They have all these oil wells and they're pumping oil out and its sinking. The problem was they couldn't get any agreement to take active steps because of so many owners. If it had been one company they could have done something. Anyway, that contributed to the demise of Long Beach Naval Shipyard. Otherwise we were doing pretty well because there was San Diego for ship repair and up in Bremerton at that end of the mainland.

OEO: Where did you live while you were in Long Beach?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We bought a house near Knott's Berry Farm. It was a very nice home with a built-in swimming pool and Florida room. I believe the price was \$17,000. We also had a trailer home which we kept at Ensenada and enjoyed on weekends. The head Mexican there loved us because we would trade him American canned goods for lobster. We lived well.

OEO: Let's move onto the Board of Investigation and Survey which was, for you, 1961 to '63. Where were your offices located?

CAPT PHILLIPS: We were in Arlington, near the Pentagon. We lived in Springfield, Virginia.

OEO: What does the Board of Investigation and Survey do for a living?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The Board of Inspection and Survey: the main job is going aboard ships that are being delivered and making sure builder complied with the contract. We would go around the ship talking to the crew because by that time the crew was manning it and they knew things that weren't right. We would spend several days on the ship taking the ship's repair list and adding whatever we saw fit and wound up with a report called a PAT: Preliminary Acceptance Trial. Then several months later, when they can schedule it, there's a FAT; Final Acceptance Trial, when you go back and try to clean up all these items. There would also be a conference to decide on the items in dispute; whether it was a contactor responsibility, our responsibility or the company's responsibility. If we made changes and didn't issue a change order then that was our responsibility to fix. It worked pretty well except a lot of people got the opinion that we were going aboard ship and trying to find something wrong.

We surveyed ships also. The second day I reported aboard they said, "You're going down to North Carolina and survey Morton Salt's yacht", which the Naval Academy had received. It was, I think 88 feet long. So I went down there with one other man. Turns out, a towing company had run the yacht aground. In trying to free it, they had pulled all the cleats off the deck by using a winch. Upon examination there was also some damage to the teak decks. The question was whether to repair the yacht or survey it. I asked the Chief of the Bureau of Ships if the Naval Academy really intended to use the vessel. The shipyard where the yacht was located said they could fix the problems, so that is what we did and the Naval Academy got a nice big yacht courtesy of Morton Salt Company. That was the kind of thing we got into with surveying.

Another time there was an MSTs tanker, the *Potomac*. They were in Cherry Point, North Carolina where the Inland Waterway starts going through the land at an offloading point for jet

fuel and other stores. They finally cast the ship off and it went to the bottom but the engine room, which is all the way aft, was in good shape. That was what I was interested in. I went in and inspected the furnace and tubing, etc. and decided that the machinery room was in pretty good shape. So we submitted the survey through the chain of command to the Secretary of the Navy. Here is a piece of government property worth millions of dollars; you can't just write it off. You've got to survey it and proceed from there. There were rules for it. If the cost of repairs exceeded a certain percentage of the value they would survey it and sell it to somebody or junk it. That was the survey of the *Potomac*. Later on, Chester Shipbuilding rebuilt it. They threw all the junk away, cut the stern section, built a ship around it and it was recommissioned. It was an interesting experience. I had never surveyed a ship in my life. Of course it went through channels. It wasn't my survey. I was just the guy that did it.

OEO: Admiral E.B. Fluckey had command of that board. Was he there when you reported aboard?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes, and a great person to work for. He was very good to me and recommended me for early promotion to Admiral on three fitness reports with a long paragraph of supporting words. But, you know what I did. 1965 came and I had 30 years for retirement and I saw a lot of my friends getting out and getting good jobs. My detailer told me that I was getting pretty senior and they didn't know where to put me. That sounded like a message to me so I put in for retirement. Shortly after, it was announced the president of the board for promotion from Captain to Admiral was being headed by Admiral Eugene Fluckey. Of all the rear admirals in the Navy it was Admiral Fluckey and I'd never bet on that. So now the selection board meets and my name never got in there because I'd put in for retirement.

OEO: What kind of a boss was E.B. Fluckey?

CAPT PHILLIPS: A wonderful man, a gentleman, and he'd listen to you. Some of the inspection issues we uncovered, I'd go in and tell him about it, tell him what I thought, and invariably he would agree. He was in the class ahead of me at the PG School so we spoke the same language. We spoke Marine Engineering fluently. He was a wonderful guy. He wanted to come over to the Eastern Shore when he was living in Annapolis. He said, "Can I come over? I'm supposed to go to a big shindig for the Medal of Honor winners but we would rather come and get together with you and Shirley and eat crabs". We also visited him in Portugal when he had the Iberlant command.

OEO: Eugene Fluckey - for the record; Medal of Honor winner - for his actions while commanding submarines in World War II. Did he ever talk about any of his exploits with you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Oh sure. He was a wonderful speaker and he would tell stories because a lot happened. Then he wrote the book, "Thunder Below". I've seen pictures of his battle flag with a train on it. He sent his people ashore in a rubber boat and he calculated the deflection in the rails and made up a bomb out of torpedo stuff and they stood offshore and watched the evening express go through and it went "boom". It really happened.

OEO: *Naval History Magazine* had that story recently. I ran into him one day – I think it was the Naval Academy – and he said, “Have you got my book”, and I said, “Yes, I’ve read it”, and he said, “Well if you don’t I’ve got several copies in my trunk.”

CAPT PHILLIPS: He lost his wife who was a wonderful person and later remarried. They came to our 50th wedding anniversary and somewhere along the line he wrote something to me about wanting me to be sure and attend his 50th wedding anniversary, and he’d just gotten married a couple years after. But I knew him right up until the end and went to his funeral.

OEO: Let’s go back to the Board of Inspection and Survey. What other thoughts have you got about that job?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was only there for two years but it was a hard job. I’ve got a list of the ships that I went aboard and what the purpose was and so on. We were gone a lot but Admiral Fluckey took good care of us. He told us to come in one hour later for the traffic because we were in town. We worked very hard and then we’d go away. We had to do all the write-up on the last inspection or sea trial and the next thing you know we’re on our way to Pascagoula. We went to Holy Lock a couple of times. He got a plane of his own and stopped in Ireland and then went to Scotland. We were aboard a submarine tender over there. That was the purpose of our trip. Another time we went to Italy where the 6th Fleet was based. We were busy and didn’t waste any time. But he knew all that so he said, “We’ll come in an hour late because you’re working on this survey.

From that job I went to the Bureau of Ships which was then on Independence Avenue in the “Old Navy” building.

OEO: That was 1963 to 1965 and you were Director of the Machinery Division. What does that mean?

PHILLIPS: We had seven or eight different groups under us so there was a piping group, propellers and shafting group, electrical, pumps, and maybe one or two others and they were all separate little groups. Part of them were headed by an officer and some headed by a civil service engineer. That was the machinery division and the end product was, keeping up with casualties and what was going to happen. We were right in the middle of it, getting feedback from ships and problems.

OEO: So you primarily were dealing with the current events of the Fleet as far as ships were concerned. Was your job also to be involved in design of new ships?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, that was a separate design outfit but we worked together. That was the Design and Building Division. We were just involved with the day-to-day maintenance and that sort of thing and the current equipment.

OEO: You retired in June of 1965. How many Navy years did you serve?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I got credit for one year of enlisted time as a reserve. I had a commission a year before I went on active duty. But when they figured it all out I had 29 and $\frac{3}{4}$ years and that's what my pay is.

OEO: Did you go to work right away when you retired?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Yes. De Laval Turbine in Trenton, New Jersey wanted to hire me but they said, "It would probably look a little better if you didn't show up for a couple of weeks". So I took terminal leave - I had a lot of leave backed up. A retired Navy engineer became the vice president about that time and he was the one who got me hired. The week I got there they fired the old president of the company. When they introduced me to the new president and said, "He's going to be our sales engineer for the Great Lakes". The new president said, "No he isn't. He's going to get into production and get that damn backlog of pumps and compressors finished and shipped. We need some money coming in here". So my tour as a sale engineer for the Great Lakes, for De Laval equipment lasted about two minutes.

OEO: What did you end up doing?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I stayed with De Laval as Materials Manager and I had a lot to do with the shop but I was back in the same thing as I was doing when I was in the shipyard as a ship's superintendant. We had customers waiting and they would come to me and, "What are you holding back? What do they need to get this job finished and shipped?" Things got overlooked and we tried to get back on the track when we found out what they were. We had lots of orders but we didn't have the capacity. One of the first things I did, with some help; we started farming out machining of castings. We would give the drawings to subcontractors who would machine it and send it back. That helped a little bit. My trouble was, I was just like a ship's superintendent. If anything wasn't ready they'd say, "Where's Phillips?"

OEO: Did you like working for De Laval?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I had a good time with them but we were always digging ourselves out of a hole. De Laval is a great company.

OSBORN: Where were you located when you were with them?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Trenton, New Jersey. I left my family home and rented an apartment because I wanted to get used to things and the kids were in school. So I said, "I'll come home weekends", which I did. I commuted between Trenton and Sherwood. About the time I retired from the Navy we bought a 30-acre waterfront farm in Sherwood (near Easton, Maryland). I said to my wife, "What are we doing with a 30-acre farm when I'm going to Trenton?" She said, "Oh, everything will be alright", because she loved to garden. It was a beautiful piece of land and we sharecropped it with a farmer, rotated between corn, winter wheat and soybeans. I liked farming. We were organic gardeners. We would sort our garbage. Anything that would decompose; we would dig a hole before the ground froze and cover it up. That was our organic garden. We eventually subdivided into 3 to 5 acre lots and gave three lots to our sons.

OEO: Why did you leave De Laval?

PHILLIPS: They hired a guy who was really one of the best BS artists I ever listened to. He was telling everybody what he was going to do to get rid of this backlog we're trying to work off. We had a meeting with him one day and he said to me, "I really don't know where you're going to fit into the organization." I heard about a job in Beirut, Lebanon that a friend of mine had and I put in for that and got it. I was getting ready to go and the President said, "Where are you going? You can't leave." I said, "I signed a three-year contract with the University of Beirut." He said, "You can't do that. We need you here." Later, this guy got fired. I actually left De Laval on good terms.

OEO: You went off to American University in Beirut. Did your family go with you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, they didn't at first but later two sons came with us. The other son was still going to college. My wife and I went on a merchant ship. It was a C-2 cargo ship just like the *USS Castor*. There were five passengers. We had a wonderful time on that trip, just the five of us. We ate down in the regular officer's mess.

OEO: Now we're in Beirut. What did you do at the University?

PHILLIPS: I was the senior mechanical engineer on the job finishing a new teaching hospital. This was a modern teaching hospital that was part of the University and designed by a company in New York that knew what a hospital was or how to build a hospital, and there was an American company, Crowe and Company, who had the contract to build. It was pretty well along by the time I got there. My friend who got me the job had been there almost from the start. One of the things we did while I was there was build a new chemistry building which was funded by AID. At that time I was working there they had students from 63 countries, mostly Middle Eastern.

I was responsible for the installation and testing of machinery. Once it was installed they were ready to test it. They're very clear as to what book you use to check things. For instance, there's a book called, "Elevators, Dumbwaiters and Escalators", and that's the title of the book. It's about that thick and put out by ASTM or ASME or someone and that was part of the contract. So when they said they were sending people down to test the elevators, I'm there to witness it. I'm the owner's representative. We got in an elevator and pulled the power cord and the wedges are supposed to go in and stop the elevator but it started going down. What had happened; the guiderails or the rails it rode on had become rusty so they had painted them; they wired-brushed them and painted them, so that whatever they put on it acted as a lubricant. When these wedges came in when the power went off it was lubricated so it didn't stop the elevator; the guardrail. That was straightened out finally but I learned a lot. I learned how to test an elevator.

The worst thing that happened; we got ready to test a propane system. In a laboratory you have Bunsen Burners and all that. On every floor they had at least one lab, if not more, and it was connected to a bank of either propane or butane. To start the test, they opened all the distribution valves, turned the gas on all through the building and in less than 24 hours the pressure was zero. It all leaked out. So they said, "Can we put wintergreen in it and sniff for it", and I said, "Yes,

but you still have to do the water test.” They said, “We don’t have the equipment.” I said, “Do you have glass tubing, rubber tubing and a ruler? We’ll make a manometer. It’s real easy to make.” That’s all they had to make because they’re only measuring pressure to an inch or two of water. It’s too light to use mercury. It wouldn’t work very well like it does in a barometer. So anyway, they kept after me. I wore my hardhat regularly because I keep looking up. They hated my guts. I was being strict on detail and being a miserable son of a bitch. They finally discovered what caused the leak. They had been installing shelves somewhere. To install a shelf you’ve got to have a bracket and drill holes. They had drilled holes to put up these shelves and went right through the tubing delivering gas. If I hadn’t been a son of a bitch they would have had a problem. Some weekend they’d fill the whole building with gas and then someone would come in Monday morning and light up a cigarette, and “pow”, it’s gone. But I was still the SOB. I think they finally came around, particularly the head guy. It was the guys that worked for him that couldn’t stand me because I was so strict.

OEO: You next went back to DeLaval and were positioned in Washington DC.

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was one of the three sales engineers there but I was able to get on De Laval jobs that weren’t Navy. I never had any problem with that. I was a sales engineer and I got around and knew the business. I was in the field where we were selling fresh water pumps for water treatment plants and places like that and De Laval had a good variety of those pumps. We could adapt one of our other designs to a specific application. The biggest one I got in on; I helped sell three 48-48 sewage pumps - that’s 48-inch suction, 48-inch discharge - for under the island in the Potomac for the Washington Engineering Department. The pumps were to handle sewage. There was a collector line that took it down under the bridge, or just before the bridge, where the sewage treatment plant was for the whole DC area. It was a huge plant. But I enjoyed the work.

OEO: The next place you go is to the County Engineer right here in Talbot County. Why did you leave De Laval?

CAPT PHILLIPS: This ad was in the *Retired Officer’s Magazine* and they were looking for a county engineer. Earlier, I got my professional engineer’s license and was licensed in the District of Columbia. With that I could get my Maryland PE license. When I applied for the job I didn’t know anybody in the area but my wife and I already owned the property nearby in Sherwood. So here they’re looking for an engineer for Talbot County and I owned property there, so that was a plus for me.

Maryland passed a state law that required counties to have a soils control engineer to take care of storm drainage during the development stage to make sure you didn’t get a development in a flood plain or something. I wasn’t making nearly as much money but I didn’t care. I was living at home. I was tired of the Shirley Highway commute. It worked out pretty well up until the time one of the county commissioners fancied himself as an engineer, and he’d tell me to do something that I couldn’t do in good conscience. One time I wanted to reinforce a bulkhead at one of the landings and told him what it needed. Rather than spend money he said, “Just put out some no parking signs there.” I said, “They’re going to park there anyway.” I had a hard time convincing him I wasn’t trying to just spend money. It was a case where the wooden seawall, or

timbers in there for the bulkhead were getting old and people were parking close to it but it was falling in and eventually it was going to capsize.

We had some other interesting jobs. At the ferry landing there used to be an oyster shucking house so there was a huge mountain of oyster shells. We got some state money that was raised by taxing fishing tackle and fishing gear. The money was used for docks, bulkheads and so on for both recreational boats and commercial oyster boats or fishing boats. I was involved in the job using state money to enlarge the pond there. There was a little virtual pond that we left and there were plenty of oyster shells for anything you wanted, and of course they enlarged a couple of times. We put in piers which were loaned out to owners and some fishermen or individuals that wanted a boat, and others of course for the watermen that needed a place to tie up their boat.

We did another one down on Tilghman Island that was just a big marsh and it was a mess, and the Corps of Engineers paid for dredging it. We dredged it and then put in piers and bulkheads. That was a big project and it really worked out well. Most of the boats were tonners and so on but there were privately owned yachts in there, small sailboats and things. That project was a God send for a little place like Tilghman Island.

Then I heard about a public health engineer position. I had to get on the approval list, or on the schedule of public health engineers that were qualified for certain state jobs. I got pretty high up on the list because of all my experience in that type of work. The state was going to hire engineers for each county on the Eastern Shore - there were nine counties - and the position was going to be the regional engineer to assist in solving the problems in water and wastewater. In the old days on the farms or out in the country they'd take a drum and punch a couple of holes in it and run the waste in there and then some farm tile and run it up to the nearest ditch or wherever they could get it, and that was the way a lot of septic tanks in the rural areas were put in. So there was a wide open field for that. There was so much to do. In the meantime I got very much involved in the Critical Area Law that was passed that lengthened distances you could build back from the waterline. There was a lot going on and I knew about it because I had waterfront and we were farming it. I said, "We'll have a clear zone between the growing part and where it really gets marshy", and we had a wonderful book of soil maps that someone made for every county. They did some aerial photography to scale and delineated the type of soil. You could tell whether it would perk or not. I remember going on our 30 acre farm and there were seven different classifications of soil. But the Critical Area Law was a big change. It was all a part of cleaning up the bay. The bay is still lousy and they are still saying the same things they were saying 25-30 years ago. There is a problem here and I used to side with the farmer because he's got a problem. He gets blamed for over-fertilizing. Most farmers don't over-fertilize. They watch their costs. But they still get a lot of criticism. They contribute to it with chicken manure and things like that. The legislature passed these things that should help but they either don't enforce them or don't follow through. It's a constant problem because all you hear about is water pollution, and it's manmade. Well its animal made too. That was what I dealt with as County Engineer.

When I worked for the State I had an office in Easton and an office in Annapolis and had to keep an eye on both of them. That was the Maryland Environmental Service which is part of Department of Natural Resources. My biggest job was to manage the used oil project and I went

to every single county with our pitch to get the counties' cooperation. Different gas stations and places like that agreed to take used oil and we contracted to go around and collect the used oil. We had signs made. I made up the sign but someone improved on it; metal signs to post at garages, "Recycle Here" and I distributed those. I went right to the County Manager's office to set up a meeting to tell people what was going on and got every county in Maryland. I was interested particularly in the mountains. I thought it was all part of this coastal plain; the mountains up there and ski slopes. I contacted every single county to bring them up to date and give them signs and give them a little pep talk. I had a state car and covered a lot of territory. That was the major thing that I got involved in that took the most time.

We got an award from the Governor and the American Petroleum Institute for our work on that. That was a good working outfit and we produced. I was there ten years or more and decided to retire. I was getting old then, having worked a total of 15 years after I retired on 30 from the Navy so I was ready to concentrate on sail boating. I had some ups and downs but most of them ups. I was ready to retire but I wasn't that old. I retired from the Navy at 48.

OEO: At this point I want to go back just a little bit. You were married on August 17th, 1941. Talk a little bit about how you met your future wife. First of all, what was her name?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Shirley Karns. Her father was a naval officer, Franklin D. Karns. His grandfather was also a naval officer; a famous athlete. He won several prizes when he was a midshipman back in the early 1900's. He also got a general court-martial for putting a battleship aground in New York Harbor. He was found guilty so that was the end of his career. My father-in-law was F. D. Karns, Jr. He was a surface officer and an ordnance specialist. Shirley was in high school when he was in PG school at the Naval Academy. She got to be big on campus with the swimming coach. He taught her swimming and she had many swimming awards. I've got a whole drawer full of them. Among other things, she had the Senior Lifesaving Award; the highest award for lifesaving that the Red Cross puts out. She saved several lives and I didn't know about a couple of them until the funeral or right after the funeral. There was one guy talking to me and he said, "I was swimming in Subic and I was having problems and Shirley was there. She saved my life. I wouldn't have made it without her help."

The biggest one was a rescue. She was Chief Mate on a Chesapeake Bay Schooner operating as Coast Guard Auxiliary conducting a Sea Scouts training cruise. She had a boat load of high school girls on a training cruise. The Captain, who was a Chesapeake Bay waterman, was skippering a boat on leave from the Naval Academy. I often went on these Auxiliary cruises, as I did that day. There were just the three adults and the rest were these Girl Scout mariners. They were coming up the bay and spotted this guy in the water clinging to a piece of junk and calling for help. The Captain brought the boat around and Shirley got in the water, went over and brought him to the ship. But now the Captain's got a job. He needs some help. So he rigged one of the spars as a boom and she got the guy out where they could use the rig and brought him aboard. He survived but he'd been in the water a long time. The Captain questioned him on the location of his boat. It had launched across the bay. He told him where it was and said his partner had been on it when they got in trouble. The Captain, without a computer or anything else, turned around . . . he knew the tides. He knew the area and he believed what the guy told him.

They went across the bay and found the other sailor. The whole thing got a good write up in the *Washington Post*.

I saw her in action one night. We were again in the Coast Guard Auxiliary looking for small boats that were in trouble and so on, and we took care of a lot of them. Invariably we'd have them get in the water if they could and take the main halyard and pull on it and get it over to the side and get the boat in deeper water, and it comes right off. Usually they were situations like that. Anyway, she swam over, got this guy – the guy and his wife – in this boat and they couldn't swim. So she brought him aboard and he said, "Aren't you going to get my wife?" She went back and got her and in the meantime we spliced extra anchor rope together and were able to tow the boat into Kent Island. She got a write-up on that. Everybody worked hard and did what we had to do and got them up there into Clayburn and then they were able to get a ride somewhere. That night we worked our regular shift and then some. We did a lot of that in the Coast Guard Auxiliary but then they got real tough about it. We were restricted from doing that unless life was in danger.

OEO: You made a list for me of people that made a lasting impression on you in your life and I'd like to go through them and just have you comment on each one of them. The first one is your high school history teacher.

CAPT PHILLIPS: He was a great teacher. In our high school we could take Civics, American History, another history, plus Egyptian going back to biblical times. I took every history course I could. He got me interested in history.

OEO: Why did he stand out and make such an impression on you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I think it was because of the way he presented it. He made it interesting and that's kind of hard to do sometimes. He was just a natural born teacher.

OEO: The next gentleman you mention is Captain J.H. Tomb who was the Superintendent of the New York State Merchant Marine Academy.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Right. He was a retired U. S. Navy Captain. He was Superintendent of Fort Schuyler and also the commanding officer of the school ship. His goal in life was to make Fort Schuyler the Annapolis of the Merchant Marine.

OEO: What made Captain Tomb a great leader?

CAPT PHILLIPS: He acted and behaved and treated people like a leader. When you saw him on deck you could tell that he was really on the ball. He had some pretty good jobs. He was Governor of the Panama Canal at one time when they had a naval officer as Governor. I got acquainted with him because I was on a committee. Each year, when we went to Bermuda, we had a dance aboard ship and I was on the committee to make all the arrangements for the dance, it wasn't hard to do because there was someone there that worked on it the previous year. But I worked with him because one of the cadets was charged with rape. I was questioned about what I knew or how things went, or what controls were in place. I knew the guy but I didn't know

anything about his date. The way Captain Tomb handled that I got the feeling; the impression, that he knew a lot more than he let on about what had transpired. The way he handled the whole thing was impressive. Some people could go bananas in that situation; particularly since we were guests in Bermuda and something more was expected of us. He stood out in my opinion.

In those days to get a license you had to have at least two years to qualify to take the written test. I took the Steamboat Inspection Service exam to get promoted the first time; to get my first license to get promoted, and then the Coast Guard took it over; part of the Department of Transportation. At that time, all the people on the board and the instructors were licensed officers; Chief Mates, Masters, or First or Second or Chief Engineer. The first time I got back to the states I was still interested in keeping my license and I went up. I had a Second's license and I was going to try to get my First's license. I had been a Chief Engineer for over a year. CAPT Tomb said, "You've already been Chief Engineer for over a year. We'll let you sit for Chief." So I tested for Chief and had no problem with it. I knew what they were after; primarily safety type things and problems that were something a guy in the engine room or fire room wouldn't know how to handle. So, I got my Chief's license (Engineer, Ocean Steam Vessels, any horsepower) and have had one ever since.

Gulf Oil had some diesel ships and I was going to transfer to one for a few months to get my diesel time in and get a diesel license. In the meantime, the old First Assistant had a falling out with the Captain so the First got fired which left an opening. As soon as I had my Second's license I sailed as Second and I was sailing as Second when I got my Ensign commission. I was looking both ways. I was hoping to stay in the Navy but if I didn't and decided to go to sea, I wanted to do the best I could. Going to sea in the Merchant Marine isn't that great a job since you are underway all the time. We'd go to Port Arthur, load, come back, discharge at Staten Island and the next day back to Port Arthur. We cut a groove in the water along the Florida Keys. Coming back it was fun because we'd go right up the shore to take advantage of the Gulf Stream and ride the Gulf Stream a little bit coming north.

OEO: The next name on the list is Felix Johnson who you knew as a commander and later a Vice Admiral?

CAPT PHILLIPS: He was the skipper of the *Castor* and a senior commander from way back; I think 1918 or somewhere in there. He was an older but he was average age for a commander then and he had not had a sea draft command so he was given command of the *Castor*. At the time, we were outfitting and not yet in commission. We were in dry dock and other docks on Staten Island. A couple of us got together and had an electric stove and we used to cook our meals in our stateroom and the Captain heard about it. He came down and said, "Well I'll join you some nights a week." We invited him and so we got to know him and talk to him. Anyway, I got to know him pretty well. Then when it came to PG School he was in Washington and I used to keep in touch with him. I told him I'd put in for PG School and they only select a few. The next thing I know I'm selected for PG School because I had a lot of engineering experience for an ensign, and of course by then I was promoted to LTJG. Anyway, I kept in touch with him and he was just one of those . . . we used to call them "Gentlemen of the Old School". He knew how to talk to men, treat men and get respect practically by his attitude and his mannerisms. But I

kept in touch with him right up until the end. He was a well liked, well honored, long time naval officer; Felix Johnson, a great person.

OEO: Let's go to the XO of the *Castor*, H.B. Herty.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Harold B. Herty. He was a Reserve in World War I and stayed in the Navy. Harold Herty was the type of guy that knew what he was doing and he treated people well, but you know if you needed chewing out you got chewed out. He left an impression on me because I had been to the school ship and I considered myself still like an apprentice. I took correspondence courses and was still learning and I knew I had a lot to learn. So, to have contact with someone like that who would treat you like the person you hoped you were, you listened to him and admired him. At least I did.

I had a few bosses that I just tried to avoid. The Chief Engineer on the *Gulf Tide*; the first ship I went on, he was a real SOB. He'd come down to the engine room and say something and I learned right away it was, "Aye aye Sir." A classmate of mine who preceded me on the *Gulf Tide* lasted about two trips because the Chief Engineer told him to do something and he'd debate it or argue against it if it was something he thought was wrong. He was fired. He was a good engineer too and smart. The one thing I learned; if you give him any backtalk, watch out. You might be detached soon because we didn't have a permanent job. We signed on for each trip. I'd been living at the YMCA for 50 cents a night for a while so I knew what it was to be poor on the waterfront because my family didn't have money. I was old enough and experienced enough that I should have been able to get a job. I had part-time jobs waiting finally to get on the Gulf tanker.

We have to keep all this in perspective. A long maritime strike was going on and the Merchant Marine as a whole was in terrible shape. Fortunately Roosevelt started the shipbuilding program during the '30s. He started the Maritime Commission and Jack Kennedy's father was head of it. Joe Kennedy was head of the Maritime Commission and they were the shipbuilders. He built all the C-1, C-2, C-3, and T-2 tankers. A lot of them went in the Navy. Some were converted to seaplane tenders. There was a wide variety of ships; a few already built and more coming down the line at the time the war started. That was the position we were in because you can't move everything by airplane. You've got to move it in a big bulky ship.

OEO: When you say the Merchant Marine was in terrible shape, we're talking about in the late '30s as we're approaching the War. In what way was the Merchant Marine in terrible shape?

CAPT PHILLIPS: The ships that made up the bulk of our Merchant Marine were Hog Islanders (built at the Hog Island Shipyard). They built those ships just like we built Victory Ships, fast and not very high quality. Those ships became available at the end of the War. A lot of them were still sailing with Black Diamond and the big cargo steamships that we did a pretty good business with. The way they were subsidized was by mail subsidies. If they had a run to South Africa they'd have ten bags of mail and get a ship's subsidy that had no relation to how many bags of mail they had, just that they got a piece of change from Uncle Sam just for hauling that mail, and it was called a Mail Subsidy. A lot of the companies like United Fruit, instead of putting their profits back into the industry they let the ship condition go down and down. They weren't doing anything about the next generation. You've got to build new ships on a regular

basis to replace the worn out bottoms. Some of the ships that we had at the start of World War II were left over from World War I in effect.

OEO: So there weren't very many good quality bottoms available for hauling stuff for the War.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Right. The good bottoms were the oil tankers. Oil companies were making money so there were a lot of tankers being built right along. That wasn't a problem but they needed more and the T-2 tankers – and I've been on a lot of them while I was on INSURV – they were getting kind of the back of your hand when it came to money for upkeep. They'd say, "Well you can go on another run with that pump you've got", or something. They needed more money in repair and overall upkeep and they weren't rebuilding ships. The new Maritime Commission; when they took one of those ships that was subsidized by the government, they had to show what they were putting in the kitty to build replacement ships 20 years down the line. Initially that was part of the Maritime Commission program which made sense, but before they didn't have to worry about that. They got a mail subsidy.

The unions were also a problem. There were a couple of real dedicated Communists running some of the unions and a lot of people didn't like that. A lot of things we didn't like. One time we were in Port Arthur and a union guy was trying to recruit me and he warned me. He said, "You don't sign up, you might not get all the way to Staten Island when you leave here", or words to that effect. He told me I might be swimming some night off the stern if I didn't join the union. Well then I knew I wasn't going to join the union. There were good ones and there were bad ones and it all boiled down to the leadership.

OEO: The next man on your list is C. Crichton; CO of the *Ramsay*.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Charlie Crichton was early '30s graduate of the Naval Academy, and he was a man that knew his business. He was calm, cool and collected at all times. One time we got a new laundryman and we were talking about it in the wardroom and he said, "Yeah, they wash fine but my sweater, it's only that big." I said, "Oh, come on Captain. It's bigger than that." He got mad at me, got out of his chair at the head of the table, went into his cabin and brought it out, and I swear that 100 % wool shirt was down to nothing! One hundred percent wool and they boiled it. They would stick the steam jet down in the bucket and boil it. The wardroom had a good laugh out of that. But he was a good guy.

OEO: Was he the skipper on December 7th 1941?

CAPT PHILLIPS: No, Gelzer Simms was skipper on December 7th. He was at the stage in his career where he was ready for one of the new destroyers. He was class of '25 I think. He moved to a new ship and Charlie Crichton was quite a bit junior to him.

OEO: At that time of history when you were at sea, what did the officers wear for a uniform? Did they wear khakis?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Mostly khakis, generally khakis. Up in the Aleutians we had a real time. I bought chief's shirts; CPO shirts, the wool ones. The other thing we got was a khaki parka; khaki

but it was white on one side and khaki on the other and you wore an inner lining that buttoned up underneath it. They were ski trooper's parkas. We wore those at sea. We were a long time up in the Aleutians and it was pretty rough weather.

OEO: How about Captain Macintosh; CO of the *Oregon City*?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I was Chief Engineer so I had a lot of dealings with him. He knew the routine and he acted like an outstanding naval officer to me and I admire someone that looks the part and acts the part and treats, particularly enlisted men, appropriately.

OEO: Jim Goodrich, Assistant Secretary of the Navy under John Lehman.

CAPT PHILLIPS: Jim Goodrich was an oiler on my watch at Gulf Oil. He graduated from University of Michigan with a degree in naval architecture, or ship construction and naval architecture, I think it was called. He decided if he was going to work on ships he ought to know something about them. So he went to one of the Todd yards and worked as a lofts man. He knew how to do lofting. He wanted to have first hand knowledge because he was planning to be in the marine manufacturing shipbuilding industry. He was going to start at the bottom and learn the business. Part of that experience was going to sea with Gulf Oil. As a college graduate he could get a Second Assistant Engineer's license just by taking the exam. So he got together with Gulf and they hired him as an oiler. There were no openings. I got to know him and he didn't want - because I was in the same boat - he didn't want people to know he was a college person like most of the guys that were coming up through the housepipe and we kept it a big secret. I knew because I knew they were talking about me the same way. This young kid has been going to sea for a little while, now he wants to go to sea with the big boys. During the War they made him Chief Engineer of one of the Todd yards up in Spokane. Another time he took over the Todd factory tower unit in San Pedro, California. He was head of that. There was a big function one day and our shipyard commander; Admiral Plouner, was there and he said to Jim Goodrich, "Oh, I want you to meet my comptroller; Doug Phillips. Goodrich said, "Admiral, I've known Doug Phillips since I was Oiler on his watch in the Gulf Oil."

OEO: Let's talk about your children. Your son Douglas Junior was born in '44. Where were you when that happened?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I had just finished Post Graduate School and was getting ready to move to Philadelphia where I was going to join the *Bremerton*. Douglas was a wonderful swimmer in college. When he graduated he wanted to get a degree in accounting. We didn't have much money so we said, "You go get them Tiger. You've got the stripes." He somehow got through another year to get his Masters, and he was into sailing with a friend who had a raced up Cal 40. Douglas raced with him and went to a couple of Encinitas races. He also had a good friend with a yacht. He could sail and worked on the boat in return. He was married to a wonderful girl of Greek extraction. She calls me from time to time. They didn't have any children. He was Comptroller for a beer distributor, making good money. However, the race riots in Los Angeles destroyed a large area of their customer base which forced his company to merge with a competitor. Seniority cost him his job to the other comptroller. He was in his early 60's and had a lot of difficulty in his job search. That led to an alcohol problem which led to other illness and

he eventually lost the battle. This was after my wife, Shirley passed away so she didn't have to go through the last part. She had taught him swimming and guided him through snorkel qualifications. He was an excellent swimmer.

Mike was a different person all together; a different personality. Mike and I get along really well and I talk to him every week. He is a funny guy. He lives in Woodstock, Virginia. He was into computers in the county adjacent to where he lives in Virginia and retired last year.

Bruce lives in Tacoma Park and is married to a Chinese girl. He said to Shirley, "You're always talking about how nice the Chinese are. How would you like it if I married a Chinese girl?" She said, "That's just fine." They have one adopted child; a Korean orphan. Bruce has an Austin Healey restoration and repair company.

OEO: What advice would you offer a young person just out of high school?

CAPT PHILLIPS: I would encourage getting the best education possible, and as early as possible. Whatever form of education you choose after high school, you need to work hard and prove that you are goal oriented. When I graduated from the school ship I had a failing mark in discipline. I gave an upperclassman some backtalk and he put me on report so I had a score of 20 in Conduct. They had given me a court-martial and I almost got bounced. But I went on and got back to work and that all went away. You can turn yourself around but the fundamental education is a must.

OEO: My last question: what has the Navy meant to you?

CAPT PHILLIPS: Well I got a lot of breaks and things went well. I worked to get them. But I was given opportunities and they paid off. I had a good time and liked it, and my wife was happy with it.

Captain Phillips passed away June 17, 2011 in Easton, Maryland at the age of 94.